



Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
 جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالإنجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية. الراي

Iran wants to cut U.S. presence in Gulf

TEHRAN (AP) — Iran's parliament speaker Sunday called for Gulf coordination to lessen the U.S. military presence in the region, after his visiting Kuwaiti counterpart said accords with Washington were needed to counter threats from Iraq. Iran's official Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) quoted Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri as saying that regional countries should coordinate efforts to reduce the U.S. military presence in the region. In a meeting with Kuwait's Ahmad Al Sadoun, he claimed that Israel was counting on a U.S. presence in the region to "materialise its old dream of dominating areas from the Nile to the Euphrates." Shortly after he arrived in Tehran Saturday, Mr. Sadoun told the hard-line Nateq-Nouri that since Iraq's August 1990 invasion of Kuwait, the emirate has felt more secure with U.S. forces close by. "Because of Iraq's covetous eyes on Kuwaiti soil, Kuwaiti officials feel that security deals with other countries and the presence of foreign forces in the region can offer them a sense of security," IRNA quoted Mr. Sadoun as saying Saturday.

Volume 21 Number 6225

AMMAN MONDAY, MAY 20, 1996, MUHARRAM 3, 1417

Price: Jordan 150 Fils

Kabariti, Janzouri exchange views

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti and his Egyptian counterpart Jamal Al Janzouri on Sunday exchanged views on the latest developments in the region, including the Middle East peace process as well as regional and international issues of common concern. In a telephone call, Mr. Kabariti received on Sunday, the two prime ministers reviewed bilateral relations in all fields and stressed the importance of following up the outcome of the meetings of the Joint Jordanian Egyptian Higher Committee held in Amman early this month.

League chief meets Qadhafi

TUNIS (R) — Arab League Secretary-General Esmat Abdul Meguid met Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi in Libya and reiterated the league's support to Tripoli in the Lockerbie bombing affair, the official Libyan news agency IANA said on Sunday. "The Arab League supports the Arab Libyan position regarding the so-called Lockerbie affair. This just position is in accordance with the international law and rules commanding relations between states," IANA quoted Dr. Abdul Meguid as saying after Saturday's meeting. He also said the Arab League rejected U.S. "threats" against Libya which he described as a "violation of the United Nations charter," the agency added.

Turkish troops kill 58 rebels

DIYARBAKIR (AP) — The Turkish army, pushing its two-month-old offensive against Kurdish rebels, killed 58 guerrillas in a battle in the rugged mountains of the southeast, officials said Sunday. Fighting began on Saturday near the village of Cakirpinar in Batman province, 60 kilometres east of the region's main city Diyarbakir, and continued through Sunday morning, Ahmet Erturk, the deputy regional governor, told the Associated Press. "The clash is over, the troops are searching the area" for rebel hideouts, Erturk said in Diyarbakir by telephone. Earlier a local official, speaking of condition of anonymity, said four soldiers were killed and eight others were wounded. But Mr. Erturk denied the military suffered casualties and said only three village guards were killed in the clash.

Kuwait groups oppose co-education

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Islamic groups have issued a petition urging deputies to support a bill calling for segregation among male and female students at Kuwait University, a newspaper reported on Sunday. The petition supports a bill ending co-education that was drawn up by the education committee of the National Assembly (parliament) and which will be debated by deputies in the next few weeks, the English-language Arab Times said. "Those opposing the bill are a minority group which wants to impose its will and opinion over the majority," the petition said. Responding to a campaign by liberals to reject the bill, "Such a minority group considers co-education as the symbol of civilisation, which is untrue," the petition said.

Israel to open trade mission in Oman

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli diplomat Ode Ben Haim is to travel to Oman Monday to open a trade mission in the southern Gulf state, the foreign ministry said. Oman and Qatar are the only Gulf countries to have received Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres, when he visited in April, and are slowly normalising ties with the Jewish state.

Iraq poised to announce decision on U.N. oil deal

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — The result of Iraq's oil-for-food talks with the United Nations will be announced within days and "could be... today, tomorrow or the day after tomorrow," the ruling Baath Party newspaper said on Sunday.

Al Thawra newspaper's remarks came hours after a meeting of Iraq's policy-making body which includes the command of the ruling Baath Party and the Revolutionary Command Council under President Saddam Hussein late on Saturday.

Saturday was an official holiday in Iraq as it marked the new Hijra year.

Al Thawra said there was no guarantee the outcome of the U.N. talks would be positive over Iraqi oil sales worth \$2 billion over six months to enable it to buy food, medicines and other urgent humanitarian needs.

Iraqi oil sales have been banned under punitive U.N. sanctions imposed over Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Baghdad diplomats said they did not expect Iraq to give "a yes-or-no" answer. They said Baghdad would try to make its position clear on what it could accept from

points hindering a final agreement.

"I expect some amendments by Iraqi leaders to the copy sent to them over the weekend. Then it will be up to the (U.N.) Security Council to decide," one diplomat said.

Al Thawra criticised Western media for saying that success of the talks depended on Iraqi leaders' agreeing on a draft finalised in New York last week.

The paper said Iraq would take an agreement as a step on the path of removing the punitive trade sanctions.

If it happened that we agreed to agree that will be a satisfactory step to break the embargo," the newspaper said.

Iraqi sources, speaking to Reuters on condition of anonymity, said they were not happy with the way both Washington and London handled the talks during the last week.

"They want to blame the government for any failure. That is not true. No government in the world wants to see its children die..." said one source.

"The ball is in their (U.S. and British) court. They are

trying to achieve dubious political aims from what is supposed to be a purely humanitarian offer by the U.N.," the source added.

Meanwhile, Iraqis bought only what they needed most as they waited anxiously for the deal that would provide them with much-needed food and medicine as well as strengthen their purchasing power.

Average Iraqis saw Saturday's leadership meeting as a sign the negotiations had reached a decisive stage.

"Few people are buying. Everybody is waiting for the results of the negotiations," Majed Abu Serhan, a food wholesaler, said. "If they are successful, the dinar will gain in value (against the dollar) and prices will go down," Mr. Abu Serhan said. "People are buying what they need from day to day."

Prices of basic foodstuffs fell about 10 to 15 per cent from Saturday because of weak demand, a retailer said.

The dollar, a barometer of the political situation and a hedge against inflation, traded for 803 dinars on Saturday, about the same as the 810 dinars the day before.

Saddam meets Le Pen

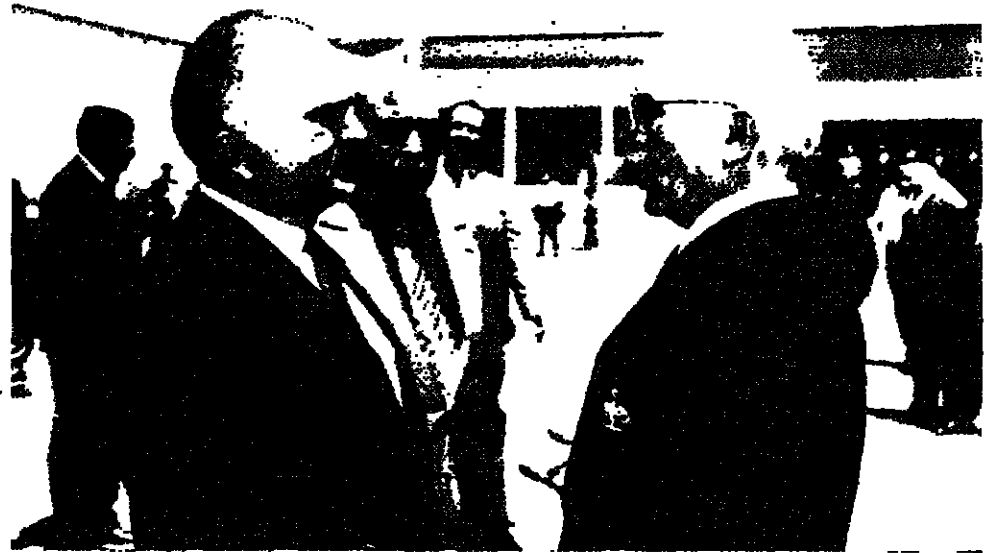
President Saddam met France's right-wing National Front leader Jean-Marie Le Pen and landed Paris's sympathetic attitude towards Baghdad, Iraqi newspapers reported.

They said Mr. Le Pen told President Saddam at Saturday's meeting that he stood with Iraq and its "heroic steadfastness against the unfair (U.N.) trade sanctions," which, he said, were tantamount to "genocide perpetrated under the fallacious international legitimacy."

"The president praised the solidarity and sympathy expressed by wide factions of the friendly French people, political and parliamentary figures towards Iraq," the papers said.

Mr. Le Pen's last meeting with President Saddam was on a trip to Baghdad in November 1990, during the Gulf crisis over the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait. Mr. Le Pen backed Iraq in the conflict and has since lobbied for the U.N. to lift its embargo on Iraq.

Earlier, Mr. Le Pen told reporters after meeting with



His Majesty King Hussein, who left on working visit to Britain on Sunday, is seen off at the airport by His Royal Highness Prince Mohammad and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan (photo by Yousef Allan)

King leaves on working visit to Britain

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein left for London Sunday on a working visit to Britain. The King was seen off by His Royal Highness Prince Mohammad Ben Talal, the personal representative of the King, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, royal family

members, Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti, the speakers of the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Field Marshal Abdul Hafez Mirai, and senior military and civil officials. Prince Hassan was sworn in as Re-

gent during the King's absence. The King was accompanied by His Royal Highnesses Prince Abdullah Ben Al Hussein, Princess Rania Al Abdullah, Royal Court Chief Awn Khasawneh and the King's military secretary, His Royal Highness Prince Talal Ben Mohammad.

Regent and Singapore minister discuss expanded cooperation

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, on Sunday received Singaporean Foreign Minister S. Jayakumar and discussed with him means of enhancing bilateral relations and scopes of increasing trade and economic cooperation between both countries.

The Regent stressed Jordan's interest in building "distinguished relations of cooperation and coordination" with such countries as Singapore, which has a unique economic experience. The audience was attended

by Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Khalid Madadha. Prince Hassan hosted a luncheon in honour of the visiting minister and the accompanying delegation, attended by Prime Minister Abdul Karim Al Kabariti, Mr. Madadha and the ministers of tourism, justice and Central Bank of Jordan Governor Ziad Fariz.

At another meeting held at Raghdan Palace, and attended by Mr. Kabariti and members of the Singaporean delegation accompanying Mr. Jayakumar, the two sides discussed economic coopera-

tion and development of human resources. They also discussed possibility of utilising Singapore's expertise to develop Aqaba to serve as a regional centre for transport and distribution. Prince Hassan invited Mr. Jayakumar to visit Aqaba, inspect its facilities and assess the possibility of developing it, utilising Singaporean expertise.

Prince Hassan emphasised the importance of coordination between the transport sectors of the two countries and the need to strengthen

(Continued on page 7)

Crown Prince visits families of accident victims in the south

MAAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, on Sunday visited Maan Governorate to condole the relatives of seven workers who died in a road accident 25 kilometres south of Maan on Friday. He expressed deep grief to the bereaved families.

The Crown Prince also visited the scene of the accident and inspected the condition of the road and passed directives to the local officials on the need to widen and maintain the road to help prevent

further accidents.

Seven workers, all employed by the Shideh Phosphate Mine in southern Jordan, were killed Friday and their bodies burnt when a Saudi bus hit their car while parked on the right hand side of the road during a sandstorm which caused very poor visibility, according to police reports. The impact pushed the parked vehicle over the edge of a precipice and the car went down in flames, they said.

Prince Hassan earlier sent

a cable of condolences to the chairman and members of the board of the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company and the company workers.

"The loss of life of members of our Jordanian family was tragic to all Jordanians and was particularly painful to His Majesty King Hussein," said the cable.

Prince Hassan said he shared with the bereaved families their pain and grief over the tragedy and requested the company to offer all possible assistance to the families of the victims.

Israel is on unprecedented alert against militant threat

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Even as they celebrated the arrest of a top militant held responsible for planning suicide bombings inside Israel, authorities warned Sunday of the threat of more attacks.

A leaflet issued by Izzeddine Al Qassem, the military wing of the Hamas group, threatened to avenge the capture of "one of the stars of Palestine."

"We stress again that we will continue the Jihad (holy war) and the fight forever," the leaflet said.

Prime Minister Shimon Peres told the cabinet he was continuing to receive intelligence reports about an attack on Israel's election day, May 29.

"The campaign has so far stood in the shadow of the threat of a terrorist attack like a sword above our heads, like a cloud of heavy fear," an editorial in the Yediot Ahronot newspaper said Sunday. "The threat has not been lifted."

A senior security official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said it appeared inevitable that militants would try to stage an attack, "both to show they still are alive and well and also to spread fear."

Israel has meanwhile

ordered the biggest security clampdown in its history.

The army, police and Shin Bet internal services were placed on a level of alert "without precedent" since Israel was founded in 1948, a senior military official told AFP.

An Israeli army patrol on Friday shot and wounded Hassan Salameh, a senior leader of Izzeddine Al Qassem, who is accused of masterminding three suicide bombings on Feb. 25 and March 3 which left more than 40 people dead.

The Israeli army tightened its closure Sunday of Palestinian towns on the West Bank and Gaza Strip and arrested eight members of Hamas.

Army chief of staff General Amnon Shahak said Mr. Salameh's arrest would "prevent new attacks. We have settled our accounts with a dangerous terrorist."

But Gen. Uzi Dayan, army commander of the West Bank, told journalists that Mr. Salameh had been planning new attacks and that his arrest did not diminish the security threat leading up to the elections.

Gen. Dayan said Mr. Salameh was sent to West Bank from Gaza by Hamas after Yahya Ayyash, the group's top bombmaker, was

killed in January.

Security sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Mr. Salameh, 25, was born in Khan Yunis in the Gaza Strip. As a teenager during the Palestinian uprising, he threw stones at Israeli soldiers and settlers and was shot in the leg. In 1992 he was arrested for belonging to Hamas.

After his release, Mr. Salameh went to Jordan, then Sudan and Syria, where he received military training. In 1994 he returned to Gaza and began working with the Hamas military wing.

About three weeks before the first bombing on Feb. 25, he disappeared, his family said.

The security sources said Mr. Salameh had hooked up with Mohammad Deif, the head of Izzeddine Al Qassem who is still at large, at the beginning of 1996. Mr. Deif directed him to go to the West Bank and establish a suicide brigade to carry out attacks inside Israel, they said.

Equipped with intelligence and equipment, Mr. Salameh went to the West Bank, where he met Mohammad Abu Wardweh and told him to establish a suicide cell.

(Continued on page 7)

IAF urges U.S. to seek better ties with Arabs

AMMAN (Agencies) — Using an unusually friendly tone, Jordan's main Islamic party has urged the United States to abandon its support for Israel and "open a new page" in relations with Arabs and Muslims.

Lawmakers of the Islamic Action Front, which has 16 members in the 80-seat parliament, warned in a letter addressed to the U.S. Congress that Arab and Muslim frustration with U.S. backing for Israel could lead to "consequences that will not serve the mutual interests of our two nations."

"We are sure of your political wisdom and farsightedness... therefore, we urge you to open a new page with the Arab and Muslim world based on justice, mutual respect and in protection of people's interests," the two-page letter said.

IAF officials said the letter has been delivered to Wesley Egan Jr., the U.S. ambassador to Jordan.

They declined to say how it was delivered, U.S. diplomats were not immediately available to confirm that it had been received.

(Continued on page 7)

ROYAL JORDANIAN

CITY TERMINAL OPENING

Under the patronage of H.M. King Hussein and in celebration of the anniversary of the Independence of Jordan, Royal Jordanian is pleased to announce the opening of the 7th circle City Terminal a new facility to help meet customer needs and ease travel procedures, saving passengers time and effort at Queen Alia International Airport (Q.A.I.A.).

RJ Passengers heading to all RJ destinations are welcomed to conduct all check-in procedures in the City Terminal as of the opening date then proceed to Q.A.I.A. either on RJ buses leaving the City Terminal or by their own means of transportation. Passengers will be welcomed at Q.A.I.A. and lead to a special gate directly to the immigration counter. We hope that our new facilities will make traveling easier and more comfortable for our passengers.

Arab Israelis are demanding tangible return on their votes

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel's Arab minority, knowing that their votes could make or break Prime Minister Shimon Peres in May 29 elections, have made clear that they want more than token recognition in return for their support.

Numbering more than 850,000 out of a population of five million, Israel's Arab citizens identify closely with their Palestinian brethren but are increasingly integrated into Israeli society and intend to use their political weight both to advance the general peace process and defend their specific interests.

Opinion polls show that among Jewish voters, Mr. Peres lags slightly behind his right-wing challenger for the post of prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu.

With 440,000 voters, 13 per cent of the electorate, Arab Israelis thus hold a key to Peres' victory in the race, the first time Israelis will directly choose their prime minister.

"The direct election of the prime minister has put unprecedented power in the hands of the Arab voters, who in the parliamentary elections of the past have spread their votes out between several parties," said Majid Al Hajj, an Arab Israeli sociologist.

"Arab Israelis will vote for Peres because they have no other choice, but they aren't offering him a blank cheque," he said, noting the impact on Arab opinion of Israel's

recent war in Lebanon and especially the tragic killing by Israeli artillery of 102 refugees sheltering in the U.N. camp at Cana.

"That carnage traumatized the Arab community because it reminded them of other massacres suffered by Palestinians in the past."

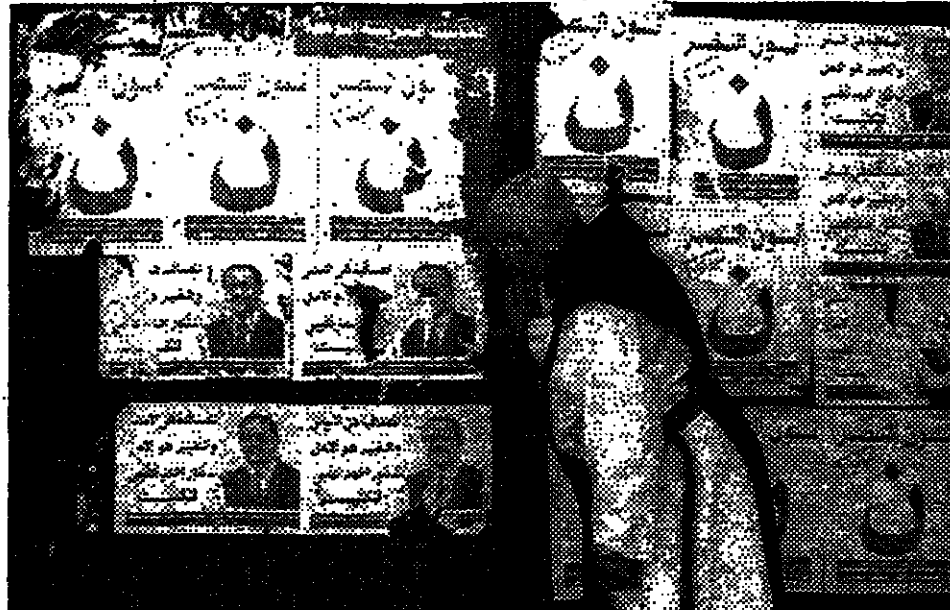
"But it still hasn't wiped out the Labour Party's support among the population and it didn't keep Arab political leaders from endorsing Peres," he said. During Israel's offensive in Lebanon, many Arab politicians threatened to call for a boycott of the prime ministerial election to punish Mr. Peres.

But late last week they finally agreed to formally endorse the Peres election bid, only, however, after making their price clear.

At a recent meeting with the Labour leader, Arab politicians demanded action to reverse decades of economic and political discrimination, including improvement in social services for their communities and the granting of municipal status to several dozen Arab villages which are not currently recognised by authorities.

Aides to the prime minister said Mr. Peres responded favourably to most of the demands, promising among other things to name an Arab minister in his next government if elected.

On the other side of the



An Arab Christian priest gets a closer look at election posters pasted in this Israeli-Arab town on the outskirts of Jerusalem by supporters of Ahmed Tibi, the leader of the "Arab Movement for Change" party who is seeking a Knesset (Parliament) seat in the general elections to be held May 29 (Reuters photo)

political exchequer, the Israeli right has little credibility among Arabs, both due to its opposition to any territorial concessions in return for peace with Palestinians and for calling into question the very legitimacy of Arab Israeli suffrage.

"During parliamentary debate on the landmark 1993 and 1995 autonomy agreements with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), conservative politicians protested that the Labour government was relying on the Arab vote to gain

approval of the accords and thus acting without the Jewish majority they assert is necessary to take such weighty decisions."

"In these conditions, the Arab electorate should vote massively in favour of Peres, even if the Arab parties make no formal recommendations," said Mr. Hajj.

"Abstaining or casting a blank ballot would only help bring the right to power."

But if the Arab Israelis are united behind Mr. Peres as prime minister, they remain deeply divided in the parallel

election of a new 120-member parliament, the Knesset. Four Arab slates are competing in the polls, although only two are given a chance to obtain the 1.5 per cent of the overall vote needed to win a Knesset seat — the democratic United Arab Party, which had two deputies in the outgoing legislature, and the Communist Hadash Group (three deputies).

The Labour Party also has four Arab candidates on its list and is expected to garner about 20 per cent of the Arab vote in the Knesset elections.

have dragged out the process of organising the referendum which began in 1992, following the ceasefire agreed in September 1991. Morocco, with more international influence than the Polisario Front, has argued its people who have settled in the area should be allowed to vote. The Polisario says that Morocco has sought to colonise in order to rule, and maintains that only those registered as residents before Spain pulled out should cast ballots.

Dr. Ghali said neither Morocco nor the Algerian-backed Polisario front had shown a willingness to help overcome the stalemate.

But he said he wanted to extend the mandate of MINURSO to enable its military component to continue, although with a 20 per cent cut in the personnel who have been monitoring a ceasefire, from 288 to 230.

Dr. Ghali, stressing that "the United Nations cannot

abandon its responsibility to seek a political settlement," said that he also intended to maintain a political office which would maintain dialogue with the parties.

Asked about the conclusions of Dr. Ghali's report, African diplomats said the U.N. mission was effectively "dead."

But Abdul Aziz said the U.N. should show firmness towards Morocco, and called for direct dialogue between the two sides.

Delays and trouble between the two parties — particularly over who should qualify to vote —

Kollek backs creation of Palestinian state but not 'redivision' of Jerusalem

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — The former Israeli mayor of Jerusalem Teddy Kollek, called for the establishment of a Palestinian state, in an interview broadcast Saturday.

Mr. Kollek, who served as mayor for 28 years, is associated with the Labour Party, which traditionally opposed a Palestinian state.

Although it dropped this rejection from its current election platform.

However, Prime Minister Shimon Peres stopped short of calling for a Palestinian state, saying he prefers a federation between the Palestinians and Jordan.

Mr. Kollek told army radio a Palestinian state would be a better neighbour for Israel than the present interim arrangement in which the Palestinians have autonomy but not sovereignty.

"I am in favour of a state for them. All this autonomy business harms us, not just them. With a state one can reach agreements, as we have seen with some Arab countries."

Mr. Kollek rejected Palestinian demands for a share in sovereignty over Jerusalem itself, arguing that this would redive the city.

"Would you have two water supply systems?," he asked. "Would you draw a line with different police forces and laws on either side? Would you have a customs barrier in the middle of the city?"

He recalled that Jerusalem was divided from 1948 to 1967 "and it was not at all easy, from every standpoint."

Mr. Kollek was defeated in the 1993 mayoral election by Ehud Olmert of the rightwing Likud Party.

The analyst also stressed that the agreement did not signal any fresh desire among the warring factions to mend fences and share power.

"This deal has come about not because either side has changed its attitude to the other, but rather because each realises that the alliances will reap short-term benefits for themselves," he said.

He said the top defence and finance ministry posts would probably soon be taken over by Hezb-e-Islami officials, but added that the prime minister's post was unlikely to be filled immediately.

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U.N. panel convenes meeting on helping Palestinians to build

NEW YORK (UNIS) — A seminar on assistance to the Palestinian people with the theme "Building the Palestinian Economy" has been convened by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, in accordance with its mandate to promote international support for, and assistance to, the Palestinian people during the transitional period.

The seminar will be held from May 21 to 23 at the Gezireh Sheraton hotel in Cairo.

The event aims to build the seminars on economic and social issues held under the committee's auspices in the past three years, and to make a positive contribution to international efforts to promote the effective implementation of the declaration of principles, signed by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in September 1993.

The seminar will be opened on Tuesday, May 21, at 10 a.m., by Egypt's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Amr Musa. Statements will be made by the representative of the United Nations secretary-general, the secretary-general of the Arab League, the chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, and the observer for Palestine.

The rest of the morning session will be devoted to examining the role of international assistance in building the Palestinian economy — statements are expected to be made by representatives of donor countries, regional organisations, United Nations bodies and agencies involved in assistance programmes for the Palestinians, other inter-governmental organisations, and non-governmental organisations active in the field. The session will be followed by a discussion in which all participants are invited to participate.

Four round tables will be organised from Tuesday through Thursday Round table I, to be held at 3 p.m. on Tuesday, will address the topic "International Assistance to the Palestinian People: Experience and Perspective." Participants will focus on multilateral and bilateral channels of assistance, Palestinian institutions, as well as international and regional cooperation.

Experts invited by the United Nations to speak on these issues are Odin G. Knudsen, representative of the World Bank in the West

Bank and Gaza; Ghania Malhees, assistant deputy minister in the Ministry of Economic, Trade and Industry of the Palestinian National Authority; Nabil Sharif, director of the Palestinian Water Authority and member of the Palestinian Council for Economic Development and Reconstruction; Mohammad Shtayeh, also a member of that council; and Michael B. McGeever, head of the delegation of the European Commission in Cairo.

The second round table, to be held on Wednesday morning at 10 a.m., is entitled "Trade Sector." Participants will discuss the implementation of the economic agreement between the PLO and Israel, trade prospects with the Arab countries and bilateral trade agreements. Experts speaking on these questions will include Robert Lawrence, professor of International Trade, Institute for Social and Economic Policy in the Middle East, Harvard University; Samir Huleileh, Assistant Deputy Minister for Trade, Ministry for Economy, Trade and Industry of the Palestinian National Authority; Hanspeter Tschani, trade policy expert, Swiss Trade Initiative for the Middle East and North Africa; and Jean-Michel Dumont, Secretary-General of the Parliamentary Association of Euro-Arab Cooperation.

Round Table III, entitled "The Role of the Financial Institutions," will start at 3 p.m. on Wednesday. Participants will consider the role of Palestinian monetary institutions, reinvesting private deposits, and the promotion of small businesses. Experts include Ahmad Mashal, head of the research department of the Palestinian Monetary Authority; James Duesenberry, professor of money and banking, Harvard University; and Said Hammoun, secretary of the founding committee of Salam International Investment.

On Thursday morning at 10 a.m., round table IV, entitled "The Housing Sector," will discuss the following sub-themes: short, middle and long-term policies and need, the role of the public sector, involvement of the private sector, financial policies and incentives, and employment opportunities. Experts include Marwan Abdul Hamid, assistant deputy minister of housing of the PNA, and Ali Sha'ath, assistant deputy minister of planning.

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Experts invited by the United Nations to speak on these issues are Odin G. Knudsen, representative of the World Bank in the West

Bank and Gaza; Ghania Malhees, assistant deputy minister in the Ministry of Economic, Trade and Industry of the Palestinian National Authority; Nabil Sharif, director of the Palestinian Water Authority and member of the Palestinian Council for Economic Development and Reconstruction; Mohammad Shtayeh, also a member of that council; and Michael B. McGeever, head of the delegation of the European Commission in Cairo.

Polisario Front warns of resumption of hostilities in W. Sahara

ALGIERS (AFP) — The Polisario Front opposing Morocco for control of Western Sahara has warned of the resumption of hostilities in the wake of the failure of the United Nations to organise a referendum on the territory.

In a message to the international community, Polisario head Mohammed Abdul Aziz said Saturday. "The prospect of the disengagement of the U.N. mission for the organisation of a referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), aggravated by Moroccan provocations, renders prob-

able and imminent the resumption of hostilities."

U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali this month recommended "the suspension of an identification process which was to have provided the basis for a referendum in the former Spanish colony."

In a report to the Security Council, Dr. Ghali said that remaining members of the identification commission would be withdrawn at the end of this month, along with 44 civilian police.

He said the identification process "should be suspended until such time as

the parties provide convincing evidence that they are fully committed to resuming it without further obstacles."

Dr. Ghali said neither Morocco nor the Algerian-backed Polisario front had shown a willingness to help overcome the stalemate.

But he said he wanted to extend the mandate of MINURSO to enable its military component to continue, although with a 20 per cent cut in the personnel who have been monitoring a ceasefire, from 288 to 230.

Dr. Ghali, stressing that "the United Nations cannot

abandon its responsibility to seek a political settlement," said that he also intended to maintain a political office which would maintain dialogue with the parties.

Asked about the conclusions of Dr. Ghali's report, African diplomats said the U.N. mission was effectively "dead."

But Abdul Aziz said the U.N. should show firmness towards Morocco, and called for direct dialogue between the two sides.

Delays and trouble between the two parties — particularly over who should qualify to vote —

have dragged out the process of organising the referendum which began in 1992, following the ceasefire agreed in September 1991. Morocco, with more international influence than the Polisario Front, has argued its people who have settled in the area should be allowed to vote. The Polisario says that Morocco has sought to colonise in order to rule, and maintains that only those registered as residents before Spain pulled out should cast ballots.

Dr. Ghali said neither Morocco nor the Algerian-backed Polisario front had shown a willingness to help overcome the stalemate.

But he said he wanted to extend the mandate of MINURSO to enable its military component to continue, although with a 20 per cent cut in the personnel who have been monitoring a ceasefire, from 288 to 230.

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Kabul residents nervous over new political alliance

KABUL (AFP) — Residents of the besieged Afghan capital Kabul are nervous and sceptical following a landmark alliance formed between the embattled government here and its former arch foe.

Civilians and some government army commanders spoke of their fears after about 1,000 troops loyal to the opposition Hezb-e-Islami faction arrived in Kabul last Monday vowing to join state troops in battle against the Taliban militia surrounding the city.

"It doesn't feel right that we are welcoming back to Kabul exactly the same people who killed thousands of our brothers and sisters just over two years ago,"

Mechanic Mohammad Gul told AFP.

The Hezb-e-Islami destroyed most of this city, its culture, services and residents the last time they fell out with the government, now it looks like they are being welcomed back like lost brothers," he said angrily.

"Our leaders don't care about the people, only about their own power and wealth, so they are prepared to risk the lives of civilians in the hope it will get them out of a tight spot," he said.

The spectacular military union between the government of President Burhanuddin Rabbani and the Hezb-e-Islami of ex-Premier Gulbuddin Hekmatyar came just 28

months after the two groups' last alliance ended in disaster.

Mr. Hekmatyar and northern warlord General Abdul Rashid Dostum launched a bloody coup against the government in January 1994 in which about 45,000 civilians were killed in the constant rocket barrages launched mainly by Hezb-e-Islami forces, locals and agencies here said.

Huge parts of the once grand city of Kabul were reduced to rubble, while hardly a building was left unscathed by the rocketing and street battles. Most families lost a member during the months of fighting.

"We fiercely fought the Hezb-e-Islami for the lives of our families only to find

now that it was all for nothing because now we are giving them the chance to do the same thing again," an army commander said.

"How can we now trust them to help us fight the Taliban without turning on us again?" asked the officer who refused to be named.

The sudden implementation Monday of the military and political pact between the government and the Hezb-e-Islami earlier this year stunned analysts and locals here.

Under the accord the Hezb-e-Islami will be given the posts of prime minister, minister of defence and minister of finance in return for helping the beleaguered government push the Taliban away from Kabul

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION	
Tel. 773111-19	
PROGRAMME TWO	
15:00 Bonkers cartoon	
15:25 Rabea Kish	
15:45 Thaqabati	
16:10	
Doc	Animals of the Mediterranean
17:00	News Flash
17:02	Chibi
17:15	1. Fudo Day Fans
18:00	Magazine — Thalassa
19:00	News in French
19:15	Magazine — Qung Shi Qing
19:30	News Headlines
19:35	
20: Arab Cup Winners Cup	
20:10	Championship
21:10	
Doc	100 Years of Capitalism in Jordan
22:00	News in English
22:25	The Bold and the Beautiful
23:10	P.S. I Love U
23:55	Taurus Rising

PRAYER TIMES

4:01	Fajr
4:11	(Summer) Dhuha
4:25	Dhuha
16:13	Asr
19:23	Maghrib
21:03	Isha

CHURCHES	
St. Mary of Nazareth Church	Sweetfish, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel.	622785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624501	
Latin Catholics Church Tel.	614190
Church of the Annunciation Tel.	637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757	
Terre Santa Church Tel. 622366	
Church of the Annunciation Tel.	625526
Anglican Church Tel. 625206	
Armenian Catholic Church Tel.	771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel.	775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751	
Armenian International Church Tel.	625526
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel.	824328
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457	
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 624932	
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691	
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295	
English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190	

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Fine weather conditions will prevail with winds northwesterly moderate in Amman. In Amman, winds will be northerly active and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp. 11/25
Amman 23, Amman 32. Humidity readings: Amman 53 per cent. Amman 34 per cent.

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 33, Amman 32. Humidity readings: Amman 53 per cent. Amman 34 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Mukhlis Muzahrah 824425

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Fine weather conditions will prevail with winds northwesterly moderate in Amman. In Amman, winds will be northerly active and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp

HRH Princess Basma Sunday addresses members of the Karak chapter of the Jordan National Forum for Women urging them to draw up long term plans for programmes and activities (Petra photo)



Bay'at Al Imam trial resumes

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Thirteen defendants, some of them accused of subversion, Sunday pleaded innocent in the first formal court session held at the State Security Court since their trial was postponed indefinitely last September.

State Prosecutor General Mahmoud Obeidat read the charge sheet of the defendants and asked the court to call on four security officers, including an explosives expert, to testify for the prosecution.

The newly-appointed court tribunal, presided over by Colonel Yousef Faouri and including judges Aref Syouf and Salem Ahmad, asked the defen-

dants individually if they were guilty of the charges, and all 13 suspects pleaded innocent.

Seven of the 13, known by their group affiliation, Bay'at Al Imam (pledge of allegiance to the leader), are charged with plotting to carry out extremist attacks and illegal possession and manufacturing of explosive materials.

The remaining six, who are free on bail, are charged with slander against His Majesty King Hussein.

For the past nine months, the group's trial was postponed indefinitely because the defendants refused to appoint lawyers, and when the court appointed lawyers to defend them they rejected the measure.

The group repeatedly dis-

rupted the court session because they said they did not believe in the justice system.

On May 6, the seven defence attorneys appointed by the Jordan Bar Association asked the court to speed up the trial of their defendants to insure justice for their clients.

The group followers believe only themselves to be the "true followers" of the Islamic faith and do not attend mosque prayers or schools because they reject the entire system.

The group was uncovered before it could actually carry out any attacks.

Newly-appointed Judge. Col. Faouri set June 1 to start hearing the prosecution witnesses.

Government to pass on more responsibility to private road works firms, says Majali

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Public Works and Housing Abdul Hadi Majali Sunday announced that the government is offering the private sector the opportunity to develop overland transport and transport services in general in the country and therefore will re-examine and amend existing legislation to meet that goal and the rapid developments in this sector.

Deputising for His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, at the opening of a seminar entitled: Overland Transport Engineering, Mr. Majali said the Jordanian transport sector faced many difficulties in the past few years especially in catering to the increase in demand for public transport services, the increase in the country's population and the expansion of urban development in various regions.

Political developments over recent years led to increased migration of people further aggravating the situation and imposing heavy burdens on the transport sector in the Kingdom, said the minister.

He said previous governments took serious decisions to solve the transport problems by creating the Public Transport Corporation which operates buses in Amman and by creating tourist transport companies which helped deal partly with the transport issue over the last two decades.



Minister of Public Works and Housing Abdul Hadi Majali Sunday attends a seminar on overland transport engineering (Petra photo)

He said the opening of new roads and improvement of existing roadways is continuing.

In addition, he said, the government recently made it possible for owners of old taxi cabs to acquire new vehicles for city transportation free of customs duty in order to

facilitate the modernisation of public transport services.

Rawhi Khatib, an engineer from the Jordanian Society for the Prevention of Road Accidents, presented a working paper to the meeting demanding better organization of bus stops, a ban on pri-

ivate cars entering certain downtown areas during rush hours assigning bus stops around cities, encouraging the public to avoid going into the town centre during peak traffic period and providing transport services for residents in outlying areas.

Sri Lankan baby sale case goes to trial

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The former honorary consul of Sri Lanka in Jordan, a Sri Lankan woman and a Lebanese secretary at the Sri Lankan consulate here went on trial on Sunday on charges ranging from illegal sale of babies, forgery, theft and breach of trust.

The case involves what the prosecution describes as an organised ring for selling babies born to Sri Lankan women working as domestic

On trial are Tawfiq Abu Khajil, 37, a Jordanian businessman who served as Sri Lanka's honorary consul until the Colombo government fired him after his arrest in March, Sri Lankan Anouma G.L., who is accused of agreeing to sell her baby to foster parents, and Andrea Bostani, 37, a Lebanese woman who served as Mr. Abu Khajil's secretary.

Ms. Bostani, who was out of the country when the arrests were made, remains at large and is tried in absentia.

Judicial sources said Jordan had issued an international arrest warrant for the woman.

Mr. Abu Khajil and the Sri Lankan housekeeper were arrested on March 13, shortly after airport police stopped a Dutch couple from leaving the country with a five-month old boy whom they thought they had legally adopted after paying \$8,000 to a consulate employee as instructed by Mr. Abu Khajil, the formal charge sheet says.

The Amman Criminal Court, presided over by Judge Jihad Khasawneh, adjourned the session

until Tuesday because a translator for the Sri Lankan defendant was not present in court.

Ibrahim Huneiti and Ahmad Tubeishat are representing Mr. Abu Khajil in the case, which is prosecuted by Mazen Azab.

Charges against Mr. Abu Khajil include forgery, use of forged documents, issuance of false certificates, sale of babies (illegal under a 1929 law against slavery), possession of unlicensed firearms, import of illegal wireless devices, abuse of trust and forgery of a government seal.

The formal charge sheet also unveils cases where the ex-consul allegedly kept for himself the possessions of as well as an insurance payment worth JD 35,000 for a group of 10 Sri Lankans killed in an accident in September 1990 while on their way home from Kuwait through Iraq and Jordan following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait one month earlier.

According to the charge sheet, Mr. Abu Khajil, who was fired as honorary consul by the Sri Lankan government following his arrest in March, also used to keep for himself valuables and cash from Sri Lankan maids who ran afoul of their employers and were slated for deportation.

"He would collect all the fees and penalties from their employers and arrange to put them up at the consulate premises pending their departure," says the charge sheet. "Upon his instructions, the maids would give him all their possessions, including money and gold for safekeeping, to be returned to them when they left."

"Instead of arranging for them to leave, he would hand over the maids to police or the department of immigration, which in turn arranged their departure from the country without being able to collect their possessions..." it said.

It says that Ms. Bostani contacted an adoption office in the Netherlands and set up arrangements under which illegitimate children of Sri Lankan domestic helpers were sold to foster parents for prices ranging from \$5,000 to \$8,000.

"The first and third defendants were able to sell 36 babies over the period of five years..." the charge sheet says.

A police search of the premises of the consulate following the interception of the Dutch couple at the airport found "two blank passports and five family registration books," and two "forged seals" of the Jizra local council and another for the general administration of Abu Dhabi, one of the emirates in the United Arab Emirates, the charge sheet says.

Also found were blank letterheads of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the embassy of the United Arab Emirates, the Abu Dhabi Civil Aviation authorities, the Ministry of Finance, Royal Jordanian, the first secretary of the prime ministry and the office of Field Marshal Habis Al Majali, according to the charge sheet.

The search also revealed "an unlicensed firearm" and "wireless scanners used to listen in on police and security agencies" communications, the charge sheet says.

Japan prepares to stage unique cultural week in Jordan

Ambassador says bilateral ties are excellent

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — An array of shows and exhibitions depicting the uniqueness of Japanese culture and life as well as in-depth debates on Jordanian-Japanese relations and Japan's economic success are among the events scheduled to be held in Jordan in June as part of efforts to familiarise Jordanians with Japan.

The June 8-29 "Japan Week" in Jordan follows a similar "Jordan Week" held in Japan last year and aims at "increasing Jordanians' awareness of Japan and familiarity with the culture and life in Japan," said Japanese Ambassador to Jordan Takayuki Kimura.

Among the events scheduled are exhibitions of Japanese clothing (predominantly the traditional kimonos), dolls, lithographs, porcelain, calligraphy, paper designs and a four-day Japanese film festival (all movies subtitled in Arabic).

Seminars will also be held on "Jordan-Japan relations," "the role of private sector in Japan and Jordan," "Possible Development of the Tourism Industry in Jordan," "Japan, Jordan in the International Society," "Prospects of Economic Cooperation between Japan

and Jordan," "Status of Women in Japan and Jordan," and "Industrial Policy."

Leading the Japanese team to Japan Week in Jordan will be Prince and Princess Takamado. Prince Takamado is the fourth in line for succession to the Japanese throne.

Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Hassan and Princess Sarvath led the Jordanian team to the Jordan Week held in Japan in 1995.

That event was widely hailed in Japan as a cornerstone in Jordanian-Japanese relations and as having significantly raised Japanese awareness of Jordan and Jordanians.

The Japan Week in Jordan is held in cooperation with the Jordanian government, "which is footing a good part of the expenses involved and is offering various other facilities," as well as Japanese companies, said Ambassador Kimura.

A national committee has been set up chaired by Institute of Diplomacy Director Mazen Armouti and including senior officials from the various ministries and departments involved.

"We are very impressed by the Jordanian enthusiasm in hosting the event which reflects the same

level of hospitality that was accorded to the Jordan Week in Japan," said Ambassador Kimura.

The Institute of Diplomacy and the Jordan-Japan Friendship Association are leading the Jordanian preparations for the event.

"The main purpose of the Japan Week in Jordan is to present Japan to the people of Jordan in various aspects so that the people of Jordan understand better Japan and the people of Japan," Ambassador Kimura told a press conference.

Other objectives of the event include bringing Japanese businessmen and intellectuals together, and further promoting the "already excellent relationship between Jordan and Japan," said the ambassador.

In the offing during the Japan Week are 21 different activities, including symposiums and seminars, 39 artistic performances, one fashion show, a martial arts (judo) show, two children's shows, six exhibitions and nine movies in addition to Japanese television programmes broadcast on Jordan Television.

The events, which also include a music performance featuring traditional Japanese instruments and a flower arrangement exhibi-

tion, will be held in various venues including the Royal Palace, the Royal Cultural Centre, the Sports City, the Chamber of Commerce, the University of Jordan and the South Theatre in Jerash.

A highlight of the Japan Week will be a spectacular play entitled "Medea" to be staged at the South Theatre. As intriguing and fascinat-

ing as the central theme of the play based on an ancient Greek tragedy is the setting of the play, Ambassador Kimura told the press conference.

The diplomat described Jordanian-Japanese relations as excellent and affirmed that political ties were gaining as much strength as economic cooperation.



A scene from a Japanese theatrical production



Amman Mayor Mamdouh Abbadi Sunday presides over a national planning (Petra photo)

Abbadi: Sustainable development plans depend on access to information

Conference on planning opens

AMMAN (Petra) — Amman Mayor Mamdouh Abbadi Sunday opened a three-day national conference on development planning to the year 2020 by stressing such an endeavour depends on the exchange of expertise and coordination among the concerned parties.

Deputising for His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Dr. Abbadi said that if sustainable development is to be achieved planners and decision makers must have access to statistics and detailed information.

He said earlier schemes in Jordan encountered many difficulties and obstacles because projects were ill planned.

Fairuz Masoud, an engineer and the director of regional planning at Amman Municipality, told the opening session that regional development planning should be comprehensive, embodying demographic, economic, environmental and other fac-

tors. He said Jordan's population growth rate is considered one of the highest in the world and projections indicate that by the year 2020 Jordan's population will become 10 million, that is an increase of 220 per cent over the present figure.

He said this means that the nation will inevitably face difficulties in meeting requirements of infrastructure services and therefore needs serious and immediate attention to studies and careful planning to ensure sufficient fertile lands for agriculture while leaving adequate zones for urban development.

Salim Khalifeh, director general of the Royal Jordanian Geographic Centre, told the meeting that the centre is preparing geographic data and maps necessary in the planning for the 21st century.

The conference, being held at the Royal Cultural Centre (RCC), will review plans for development of

Jordan to the year 2020 and will study concepts for regional planning, development schemes and the employment of advanced technology in analysing data to implement such plans.

The meeting, which will revolve around five main topics, is expected to yield ideas designed to ensure sustainable development and create opportunities for coordination and cooperation among the concerned authorities.

Participants in the meeting represent the ministries of Public Works, Energy and Mineral Resources, Industry and Trade, Tourism and Antiquities, Water and Irrigation, Transport, Agriculture, and Youth, in addition to the Jordan Electricity Authority, the Telecommunications Corporation, the Jordan Valley Authority, the Water Authority, the Public Transport Corporation and the Investment Promotion Corporation.

Training seminar aims to improve municipal services

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Abdul Razzak Tubeishat Sunday opened a two-day training seminar for heads of municipal councils pledging continued assistance to the councils and urging them to improve their services to the public.

Municipal councils can be helped to offer better service and enable the local communities to positively contribute to the development of their own regions, said the minister at the opening session attended by 30 mayors and their assistants as well as directors of administrative and financial departments.

Dr. Tubeishat underlined the importance of training and seminars to continually improve the efficiency of the workers in municipal councils and said that these officials should be provided with the necessary information

and training to help develop local communities and improve services to the public.

The participants, who also include officials from the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Amman Municipality, will review topics pertaining to privatisation, the role of municipalities in development, financing of projects, organisational issues and means of combating administrative corruption.

The ministry is organising the meeting in cooperation with the Institute of Public Administration and the U.S. Information Service (USIS) in Amman.

Also Sunday a three-day training seminar on managing health projects opened at the Institute of Public Administration organised in cooperation with USIS and North Carolina University.

New Italian premier vows war against mafia, unemployment

ROME (R) — Prime Minister Romano Prodi's new centre-left government burst into life at the weekend, vowing to wage war against the twin perils of unemployment and the mafia.

Just hours after taking office at a solemn swearing in ceremony on Saturday, Prodi dispatched two senior ministers to Sicily to meet magistrates and underline his administration's determination to battle organised crime.

Prodi, an economics professor, said in an interview on Sunday that the fight against unemployment would also be top of the agenda for his cabinet, which for the first time in 50 years contains members of what was formerly Italy's communist party.

"I will work to create the conditions for new jobs particularly in the south where the problems are dramatic," Prodi told newspaper Corriere Della Sera.

The 56-year old economist's first official engagement as prime minister was

to address via a satellite link a conference on organised crime being held in the Sicilian capital Palermo, where he pledged to tackle the mafia head-on.

"In the first day of the government this is an earnest and total commitment for Sicily and all of the south," he said.

Prodi is due to unveil the full government programme of his Olive Tree Coalition, which won last month's general election, to the upper house of parliament on Wednesday.

He will then face obligatory confidence votes in both chambers of parliament. Despite not holding an absolute majority in the lower house, Prodi looks certain to win thanks to the promised backing of the hard left communist Refoundation Party.

The new centre-left government, which contains two former premiers and a famous ex-magistrate whose probes helped topple Italy's corrupt political old guard, has received fulsome praise from the media, big

business and even opposition politicians.

"The Olive Tree has put together a good government," said Pierferdinando Casini, head of the centrist CCD Party and an ally of centre-right leader Silvio Berlusconi.

But the chubby-faced Prodi told his 20-strong team of ministers, drawn both from within and without the wide Olive Tree alliance, to work closely together or risk failure.

"This has to be a united and compact coalition, we have to work together as in a collective," Prodi was widely quoted as having told his first cabinet meeting on Saturday.

One of the few critical voices to be raised against the cabinet of heavyweights was that of media tycoon Berlusconi, who accused the once-communist Democratic Party of the Left (PDS) of seeking to dominate the government.

The PDS took nine of the 20 ministerial posts up for grabs.

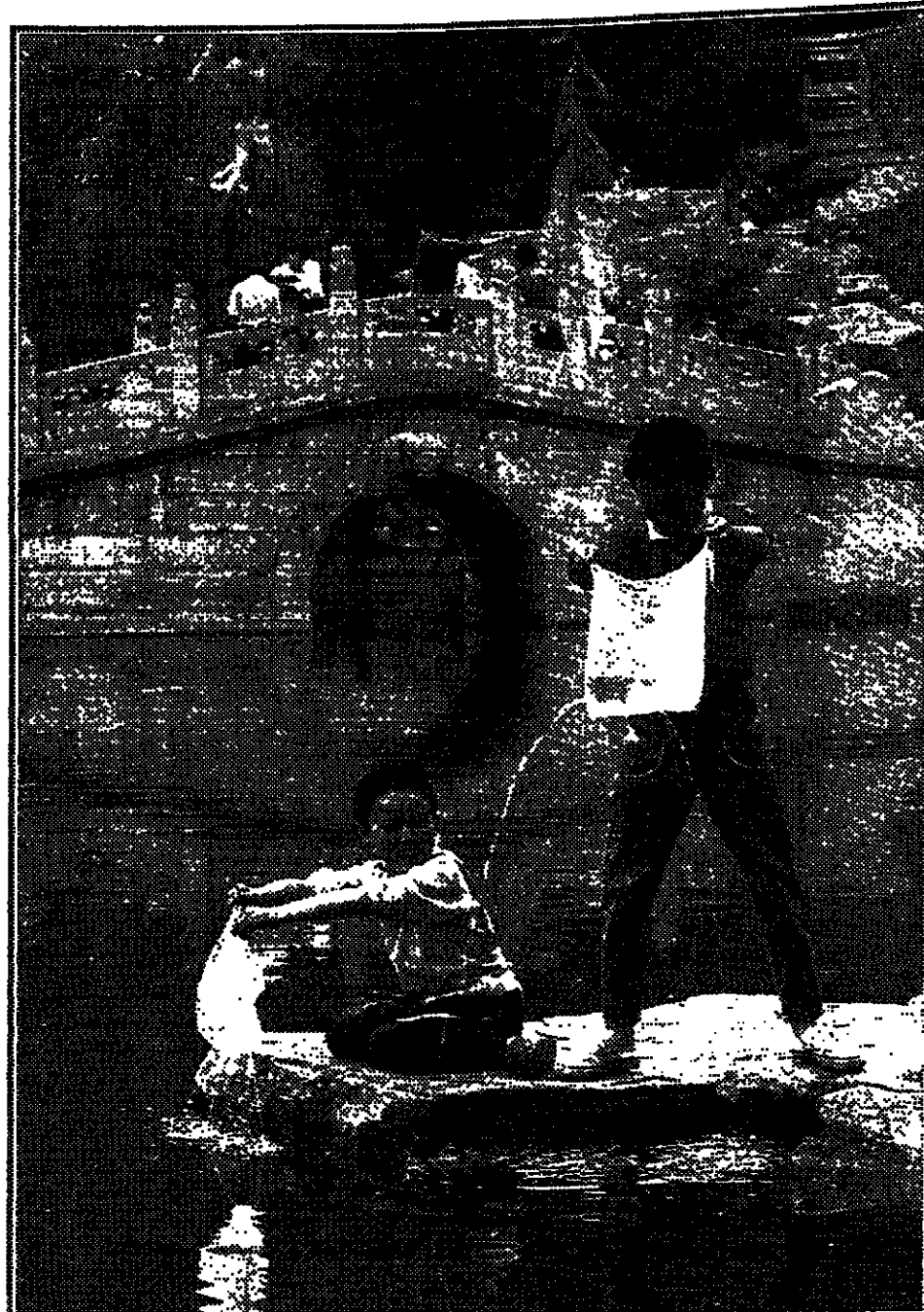
Prodi, who has previously

never held high elected office, told Corriere that his first official trip abroad would be in June to the United States on behalf of the European Union. Italy currently holds the EU presidency. He said he hoped to meet U.S. President Bill Clinton on the visit.

For his first trip outside Rome as premier, Prodi broke with protocol and shunned the state aircraft put at his disposal, preferring instead to catch an ordinary train to take him to his family home in central Italy on Saturday night.

"If I can make savings for the state so much the better," said Prodi, who prided himself on his man-of-the-people image during the election campaign.

The struggle against Italy's huge debt could make or break the Prodi government and former Premier Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, appointed treasury and budget minister, has already begun work on a mini-budget to keep 1996 deficit targets on track.



KIDS PLAY BESIDE A BEIJING PARK LAKE: Making the most of warm the spring weather, two youngsters have fun beside an eastern Beijing park lake Sunday. Beijing has many parks which feature lakes and Chinese-designed landscaping. Thousands of the national capital's residents and tourists enjoy the many and varied parks for quiet times and relaxation for a small admittance fee (Reuters photo)

Indian coalition targets 1st Hindu government

NEW DELHI (Agencies) — A centre-left coalition on Sunday said it had strengthened links with the deposed Congress (I) and regional parties to topple India's first Hindu nationalist government within two weeks.

"(Our) position has crystallised — the regional parties and the Congress have taken a clear-cut stand to support (us)," said Vishwanath Pratap Singh, a leader of the Janata Dal (people's party), the main centrist component of the alliance.

Singh, prime minister of a short-lived coalition government that fell in 1989, said the Janata Front, a coalition of regional parties, could be more stable than the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

"There is no chance of the BJP surviving," he said.

Singh said there were plans between the 11-party NF-LF, which has 111 seats, the Congress which won 136 seats, and regional parties, to unseat the four-day-old BJP government in a parliamentary vote of no confidence on May 31.

The BJP won 160 seats in the April-May polls which resulted in a badly fractured 545-member Lok Sabha lower house. It needs the support of some 80 more MPs for a majority to keep Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in office.

Singh, who declined to be a prime ministerial candidate, said the NF-LF, Congress and regional groupings should form a common stand on disputed issues.

"There should be a common consensus at least on economic reforms, defence and foreign policy," he said. "I find flexibility on both sides, (consensus) augurs well for the longer tenure of the government."

"A common programme can be evolved."

He said the pro-Hindu BJP had already pulled back from many of its election manifesto promises, including a harder stand on Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority state, to win opposition support.

The BJP also espouses "swadeshi," or economic self-reliance, opposing what it terms the unchecked inflow of foreign capital in "irrelevant" sectors such as consumer goods and wants to increase defence expenditure.

Singh said the NF-LF and regional parties, which together won 45 per cent of the vote against the BJP's 23 per cent, were a greater reflection of the people's mood.

"The third front and the regional parties... represent nearly half the voters. There is a very large segment looking for another option," he said.

Singh said a coalition government would survive in India now despite disastrous experiences earlier. "Coalitions have become a compulsion now," he said. "This shows the maturation of Indian democracy."

Kashmiri Shiite leaders cancel rites to protest polls

Shiite Muslim leaders in Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority state, Sunday banned traditional religious marches in protest of upcoming elections in the province.

"We will not hold processions," Maulvi Abbas Ansari, a senior cleric, told reporters in this state summer capital.

He also announced a boycott of the elections, which will decide four seats in India's lower house, or Lok Sabha, May 27 and May 30.

The period of Moharram, which commemorates the martyrdom of Prophet Mohammad's grandson, Imam Hussein, began Sunday and continues till May 31. The devout normally flagellate themselves in public processions during the period.

"Our community will boycott the polls, which are no replacement to the right of self-determination," he said. "Those who take part in the elections will be treated as traitors and will have to face isolation."

A raging Muslim separatist drive in Kashmir has claimed more than 12,000 lives since 1989, and the state has been ruled directly by New Delhi for the last six years.

General elections were held for the first time in Kashmir in seven years on May 7, when two constituencies went to the polls. The May 7 polls, held amid tight security, were free of violence.

Meanwhile, the militant Hezbollah group late Saturday warned some 10,000 government employees flown into Kashmir for election duty of "dire consequences" if they did not leave immediately.

"By May 22, if the employees of other states fail to leave, our group will kill them and their families," spokesman Kalim Siddiqi told reporters.

Two other rebel bodies have announced a general strike during the elections, which 37 candidates are contesting, to thwart the poll process. The boycott call is backed by Pakistan.

Kashmiri Muslims are demanding a U.N.-backed referendum to determine the future of the province, which is disputed by India and Pakistan. The Kashmir issue has sparked two wars between the neighbours.

Troops move into Indian state as clashes toll hits 58

GUWAHATI, India (AFP) — Some 5,000 paramilitary troops Sunday moved into two troubled districts in the Indian state of Assam where tribal clashes have left at least 58 people dead over five days.

Assam police chief K. Hrishikeshan said 50 battalions of the central reserve police force, who were flown into the eastern state late Saturday, staged flag marches in Kokrajhar and Bongaigaon districts to preempt violence. Police in Kokrajhar, some 250 kilometres from here, said 13 more corpses were found Sunday, taking the death toll in the violence spree to 58.

State officials reported intermittent clashes between rival Bodo and Santhals tribes, saying the Santhals were using poison-tipped arrows to attack their adversaries.

Assam Tribal Minister Rajendra Mushahary, a Bodo, told AFP Sunday that the health and sanitation facilities in 30 makeshift relief camps, where thousands of fleeing tribals have been put up, was abysmal. "Four people died yesterday after falling ill. The refugees are suffering from various ailments and the worst affected are the babies. We have to provide baby food immediately otherwise deaths will rise."

The minister blamed district officials and police for the mounting violence, saying: "They were mere spectators and their callous attitude allowed the violence to escalate."

Unconfirmed reports said more than 50 people had died, some 125,000 left homeless and 120 villages burnt in violence which began on Wednesday.

China orders Tibet crackdown

BEIJING (R) — China has ordered an intensified crackdown on separatists and criminals in Tibet amid reports that anti-Chinese protests have been broken up and monasteries sealed off in the restive Himalayan region.

A renewed crackdown on crime should include a campaign to strike at pro-independence forces loyal to Tibet's exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, the official Tibet Daily said in a front-page editorial seen in Beijing on Sunday.

A Western tourist in Lhasa said most monasteries near the Tibetan capital appeared to have been sealed off following reports of a disturbance in the city last week.

The London-based Tibet Information Network (TIN), which liaises closely with dissenters in the region, said in a report that up to 80 people, at least 30 of them women, had been injured in a clash with authorities on May 14.

An official of the Lhasa people's hospital dismissed TIN's report that two truckloads of wounded people had been taken there after the clash with authorities.

"I don't know anything about a riot or disturbance. There have been no wounded here," the official said.

Tibetan government and police officials could not be reached for comment.

"There has been some kind of disturbance. I heard about 40 people were hurt," said the tourist,

who declined to give his name.

"Everyone is talking about it. Many of the temples are closed right now and we don't have access to them," he said by telephone.

Lhasa residents said on Saturday that Chinese officials had sealed off Ganden monastery, one of Tibet's largest, after anti-Chinese protests by monks in which dozens were reported arrested.

"The monks staged demonstrations at Ganden last week," said one resident who declined to be identified.

One monk was shot and wounded by police after fighting broke out at the 15th-century mountain-top monastery 40 kilometres east of Lhasa, reports from the region said.

The demonstration erupted on May 7 after officials tried to impose regulations banning the display in temples of photographs of the Dalai Lama, who is still widely venerated among Buddhists in the deeply religious region, TIN said in a faxed statement.

An official reached by telephone on Saturday said Ganden had been closed for renovation.

"The biggest hidden danger to our region's stability and security is from the sabotage and trouble created by the Dalai Lama separatist clique," the Tibet Daily editorial said.

"Political incidents and some criminal cases fully expose their ugly faces," it said. "We must combine

the crackdown against criminals with the struggle against such separatist political activities."

In a separate report, the newspaper quoted the president of Tibet's Higher People's Court, Bai Zhao, as saying judges should not shirk from imposing the ultimate penalty on lawbreakers.

"In dealing with criminals we must firmly punish those who deserve it, and firmly hand down the death sentence to those who deserve it, to strike the criminals a mortal blow," Bai said.

On May 10, four people convicted of violent crime and murder were executed in Lhasa after a public sentencing rally attended by 15,000 people, the newspaper said.

Another 17 people were sentenced to death or prison, it said but gave no further details.

Tibet has been rocked by dozens of riots and protests against Chinese rule in recent years. Monks and nuns have played a leading role in the demonstrations.

Beijing says its rule has improved life immeasurably for most Tibetans and has blamed much of the unrest on forces allied with the Dalai Lama, who fled Tibet for India in 1959 after an abortive uprising against Chinese rule.

Belgian pie thrower strikes again

CANNES, France (AFP) — A notorious Belgian cream-pie thrower struck again at the Cannes Film Festival at the weekend, targeting a leading figure in the French film industry. Noel Gaudin, who has previously pied Jean-Luc Godard and philosopher Bernard Henri-Levy, this time ambushed the head of Unifrance Films Daniel Toscani, in full view of television cameras. The attack happened on an escalator in the Palais des Festivals where the film festival is due to climax Monday evening with the announcement of this year's winner of the coveted Golden Palm. Toscani, who is also head of the Academie des Cesar, the French equivalent of the Oscars, was seen emerging from the Palais a few moments later covered in patisserie cream. Gaudin, who has also claimed as victims Culture Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy and star TV presenter Patrick Poivre d'Arvor, warned that his pie-throwing activities are by no means over. Spanish cycling ace Miguel Indurain should watch out. Gaudin said his next target will be the "leader" of the Tour de France, to be held next month. Indurain has won the race five years in a row.

Nilas Martins follows father's footsteps

NEW YORK (AP) — Nilas Martins is following in his father's footsteps. The 29-year-old son of Peter Martins is celebrating a decade with New York City Ballet, the same company his famous father danced for. Raised by his mother in Denmark, Martins came to the United States at age 17 to study at the school of American ballet. He found "a father I obviously didn't know that well," Martins says in the June issue of W Magazine. Obviously they hit it off. The elder Martins, ballet master at NYCB, hired his son and later made him the company's principal dancer. This spring, Martins dances "Apollo," a part many consider his father's greatest triumph. Some worry he might suffer from the pressure of comparison. "It's not intimidating at all," he says. "I've always had a very healthy attitude toward being his son. I approached it like any other ballet."

Hollywood stars help in fight against AIDS

MOUGINS, France (AP) — Led by Elizabeth Taylor, Hollywood stars galore gathered for a good cause on the French Riviera. Capitalising on the celebrity contingent here for the Cannes Film Festival, the Cinema Against AIDS 1996 benefit at the famed Moulin de Mougins Restaurant raised \$700,000 for AMPAR, the American Foundation for AIDS Research. Taylor urged Americans at the gala "to send a clear and resounding message to our Congress" to support AIDS research so "the promising ideas of today become the solutions of tomorrow." Other celebrities at the black-tie dinner included Cher, Elton John, Martin Landau, Woody Harrelson, director Robert Altman, and Cannes Jury President Francis Coppola. The evening began with the world premiere of the film "Emma." Cast members Jeremy Northam, Toni Collette, and Greta Scacchi were among the 300 guests at the dinner and benefit auction that followed. Other celebrities dining on marinated monkfish, breast of chicken, and wild strawberry mousse included Tea Leoni, Patricia Arquette, and Mary Tyler Moore. Cast members of "Flinging with Disaster," which closes the film festival in nearby Cannes Monday. Prices ranged from \$10,000-\$25,000 per table, or \$1,000-\$2,500 a person.

Sinn Fein man says IRA ceasefire 'highly unlikely'

DUBLIN (R) — A Sinn Fein negotiator and convicted IRA bomber said in remarks published on Sunday that it was "highly unlikely" the guerrillas would declare a new ceasefire to gain a seat at Northern Ireland peace talks.

Gerry Kelly told Dublin's Sunday Business Post that British Prime Minister John Major had failed to go far enough in an appeal to the IRA last week to declare the truce that would earn its political arm Sinn Fein a place at June 10 talks in Belfast.

"A ceasefire is highly unlikely, but you can never say never," said Kelly, who was given two life jail sentences

for his part in an Irish Republican Army (IRA) London bombing campaign in 1973.

His remarks were the most pessimistic made by Sinn Fein since the IRA, which seeks the end of British rule in Northern Ireland, broke a 17-month truce in February because Britain failed to invite it immediately to the peace talks.

They also ran counter to widespread media speculation that the IRA will call a new, tactical, truce before June 10 to ensure that its political wing is present at least at the opening of the unprecedented peace talks.

Major wrote an article in the Irish Times last week promising that the surrender of IRA arms, the biggest hurdle facing the talks, would not be allowed to block progress towards a final settlement of the 25-year conflict.

But Kelly, who took part in preliminary negotiations with British officials last year, said Major would have to be much more explicit about how he proposed stopping the issue wrecking the negotiations.

"Major needs to be much more specific as to how negotiations can go forward from June 10," said Kelly, who denied media reports that he is a senior IRA member.

Sinn Fein's foes. Protestant Northern Ireland unionists who want to maintain British rule, have hinted that they will walk out of the talks on day one unless they result in the immediate surrender of semtex plastic explosive and other weaponry.

Kelly, who was freed from a Northern Ireland jail in the 1980s, took a hard line on the so-called decommissioning issue which was likely to infuriate the unionist leadership.

He said there could be no question of disarmament until there was a final overall settlement which satisfied both unionists and Irish nationalists

who identify with Dublin.

"If we have a peace settlement, then there is no longer any need for arms — the issue of decommissioning does not arise until we have a just solution," he declared.

"One has to agree with anyone who says that the decommissioning issue should not be a block to the negotiations going ahead. That is Sinn Fein's position. However we need to know how Mr. Major intends to achieve this," he said.

"We are not making it an obstacle. The British are making it an obstacle."

Major has yet to say how he intends to stop disarmament

throwing a spanner in the works of what he has called the best chance in a generation of solving the conflict.

The Irish government, his partner in the peace drive, has suggested that disarmament be treated separately but in parallel to the political negotiations, an idea which has been rejected by unionists and which has not been endorsed by major.

Britain and Ireland have banned ministerial contact with Sinn Fein until there is a new IRA ceasefire and are expected to hint at how they will approach disarmament in ministerial talks due in London next Wednesday.



ENDEAVOUR LAUNCH FROM CANAVERAL: The space shuttle Endeavour lifts off from the Kennedy Space Centre Sunday. The shuttle, with a crew of six, is expected to spend 10 days in space on a scientific mission (Reuters photo)

WHO issues annual report, warns of alarming rise in infectious diseases

AMMAN (J.T.) — The United Nations World Health Organisation (WHO) today released its world health report for 1996, which noted an alarming rise in infectious diseases worldwide.

While eight out of 10 children are protected by immunisation against six major childhood diseases, the world today stands "on the brink of a global crisis in infectious diseases," the report said.

According to the World Health Report 1996, a copy of which was sent to the Jordan Times, infectious diseases now represent the world's leading cause of premature death: 17 million people were killed by an infectious disease in 1995, including about 9 million children, many of whom died from preventable diseases such as diarrhoea and pneumonia.

Also, the report said, many diseases once thought to be under control, such as malaria and tuberculosis, are making deadly comebacks in many parts of the world. At least thirty new and highly infectious diseases recorded in the last 20 years are highly infectious. Among them are: rotavirus, a cause of infant diarrhoea; cryptosporidium parvum, which causes acute and chronic diarrhoea; legionella pneumophila, the bacterium causing Legionnaires' disease; ebola virus, which causes haemorrhagic fever and is fatal in up to 80 per cent of all cases; human t-lymphotropic virus, a cause of leukaemia; hepatitis E, which causes epidemics of jaundice; vibriosis cholerae 0139, which causes epidemic cholera; and human immunodeficiency virus, the cause of AIDS; and

human herpes virus 8, associated with Kaposi's sarcoma in AIDS patients. The report blamed public health sector complacency, wrought by the collapse of public health systems due to economic or social crises, for the skyrocketing rate of infectious diseases.

"The optimism of a relatively few years ago that many of these diseases could easily be brought under control has led to a fatal complacency among the international community," said Dr. Hiroshi Nakajima, director general of WHO. "The complacency is now costing millions of lives that we have the knowledge and means to save, yet that we are allowing to trickle through our fingers."

The report also cited diseases' resistance to antimicrobials as having a deadly impact on the control of diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria, cholera, dysentery and pneumonia — diseases that killed more than 10 million people last year. The report says that some of the most deadly bacteria are resistant to as many as 10 different drugs, and that in the United States, for example, antibiotic-resistant bacteria are responsible for up to 60 per cent of hospital-acquired infections. Resistance to these drugs means that people with infections are ill for longer periods of time and are at greater risk of dying. It also means that disease epidemics are prolonged.

WHO estimates that over 1.5 million of 10 million new cancer cases annually could be avoided by preventing the infection associated with them. Viruses, bacteria and parasites are the "secret agents" causing millions of cancer cases each year, the report said. Three main cancers —

stomach cancer, cervical cancer and liver cancer — are all linked to infectious diseases.

WHO's outlook contends that a combination of factors will permit infectious diseases to continue to spread, and render them increasingly difficult to control.

Population growth and rapid urbanisation that bring overcrowding and unhygienic conditions will play a role in their spread. Wars, civil strife and natural disasters force migrants or refugees into conditions fertile for infectious disease.

International air travel and the growing traffic in trade, particularly food trade, means that disease-producing organisms can be easily transported from continent to continent, the report said.

It also cited social changes — including the clustering of young children in day-care centres and the elderly in nursing homes place both age groups at a higher risk of infection.

The WHO report identifies priorities for action in three categories, which would include a category to combat new diseases such as Ebola. In this category, the WHO says it is necessary to bolster international epidemiological surveillance, develop prevention strategies to fight new and re-emerging diseases and integrate laboratory science and epidemiology to optimise public health practice.

WHO in 1995 established an information system, WHONET, to support the global surveillance of bacterial resistance antimicrobial agents. By year's end, 177 labs in 31 countries were participating in the system.

N. Korea warns of 'self-defensive' actions against South incursions

SEOUL (AFP) — North Korea on Sunday pledged "self-defensive" measures to counter any repeat of this week's armed incident with South Korean troops in the volatile demilitarised zone, its official media said.

"If (South Korea) render the situation in the military demarcation line (MDL) areas perilous, continuing to obstruct Korean People's Army soldiers on routine duty, we cannot but take legitimate self-defensive measures and make the provokers pay dearly for them," the North said through its official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) monitored in Seoul.

The warning followed an armed incursion Friday by North Korean soldiers in the northeastern sector of the sensitive buffer zone, which triggered warning shots by South Korean troops.

The North Korean soldiers reportedly fired shots into the air before being forced back to their side of mid-line of the zone, which has divided the peninsula since the end of the Korean in 1953. No casualties were reported.

KCNA denounced South Korea for deploying heavy weapons in a combat position and openly threatening to fire at North Korean sol-

diers who were "on routine duty."

"Such provocations are an intolerable challenge to the North and a wanton violation of its sovereignty," it said.

The North Korean agency gave no further details, but South Korean monitors quoted Pyongyang's central radio as saying North Korean troops had exercised "patience and restraint" to avoid a border conflict.

The U.S.-led U.N. command in Seoul said the incursion appeared "not to be serious" as the mid-point demarcation line was not clearly marked and troops often wandered from one side to the other.

But the South Korean military said it would take "stern" retaliation if North Koreans continued to violate the armistice that ended the 1950-53 Korean War.

South Korean military officials saw the latest incursion as part of North Korea's push for a bilateral peace treaty with Washington that would bypass Seoul, and urged the North to accept an offer for peace talks.

Last month, Pyongyang sent armed troops three times to Panmunjom, the only crossing point in the DMZ, following an

announcement that it would no longer respect armistice rules governing troop behaviour on both sides of the zone.

The latest incursion came as the United States and South Korea awaited a North Korean reply to a proposal for four-way peace talks involving the two Koreas, Washington and Beijing.

On Saturday, North Korean army Lieutenant Colonel Li Hong-Sup told Japanese journalists visiting the North that Pyongyang had repudiated the 1953 armistice accord and conducted manoeuvres in the DMZ as a "defensive measure."

"The DMZ has lost its function. A new mechanism to guarantee peace should be established as soon as possible," the officer was quoted as saying.

Protest in Kwangju

Meanwhile in Kwangju, South Korea, police fired tear gas and erected barricades to stop some 1,000 anti-American student demonstrators from storming into a U.S. cultural centre here.

Hundreds of riot police with shields and tear gas rifles maintained a tight blockade around the U.S.

centre, thwarting a repeated push by the radical students demanding Washington's apology, witnesses said.

The protesters brandished steel pipes, accusing the U.S. military command in South Korea of failing to stop the dispatch of hardened South Korean combat troops to put down an uprising here in 1980, they said.

There were no immediate reports of injuries, an AFP photographer said.

Dissidents here charge the United States with giving up partial jurisdiction, under then joint-command rules, over the movement of South Korean troops.

Sunday's violence followed a memorial rally in central Kwangju where some 2,000 people demanded death sentences for two former South Korean presidents jailed for their role in the Kwangju massacre, which left more than 200 people dead by official count.

"Death to the murderers," shouted the protesters during the rally in Keum Nam Street, where soldiers loyal to ex-presidents Chun Doo-hwan and Roh Tae-woo shot down some 200 people 16 years ago.

Chun, who seized power through a 1979 coup, is suspected of masterminding the Kwangju massacre,

which also left some 1,000 wounded.

Chun, 65, and Roh, 64, who return to court Monday, along with 14 other coup colleagues, are charged with corruption, mutiny and treason, which carry a maximum sentence of death.

Chun has said in court that the government at the time had no alternative but to put down the uprising because of the threat from communist North Korea.

The former general has denied prosecution charges that he ordered troops to open fire when citizens in Kwangju seized arms and rose up against the extension of martial law on May 17, 1980.

But prosecutors have charged that Chun masterminded the massacre to clear the way for his inauguration as president, which followed the arrest of thousands of opponents including incumbent President Kim Young-Sam.

Kim, the country's first dissident-turned-president, endorsed the jailing of his two predecessors, who were also accused of amassing massive slush funds from business tycoons during their consecutive presidencies from 1980 to 1993.

Monrovia enjoys lull; ECOMOG deploying

MONROVIA (R) — Liberia's capital enjoyed yet another tenuous lull in fighting on Sunday and state radio reported that west African peacekeepers had begun an operation to clear gunmen from the city.

Witnesses reported peacekeepers manning checkpoints at two strategic bridges, civilians crossing and few gunmen in sight but it was not immediately clear how determined the peacekeepers would be to maintain control. Fighters loyal to Charles Taylor, the man who launched Liberia's civil war in 1989, usually control checkpoints or wander unhindered around one bridge, their ethnic Krahn foes control access to the other. "The West African peacekeeping force ECOMOG yesterday began a major operation to clear central Monrovia of armed fighters and reestablish its control of security," said state radio, which reflects the thinking of the interim state council. Taylor is the dominant member of the council.

Sporadic shooting rang out on Sunday in the Mamba Point diplomatic district, scene of three thrusts last week by Krahn from their stronghold in the city centre barclay training centre barracks. It did not develop into full-scale clashes.

It also cited social changes — including the clustering of young children in day-care centres and the elderly in nursing homes place both age groups at a higher risk of infection.

The WHO report identifies priorities for action in three categories, which would include a category to combat new diseases such as Ebola. In this category, the WHO says it is necessary to bolster international epidemiological surveillance, develop prevention strategies to fight new and re-emerging diseases and integrate laboratory science and epidemiology to optimise public health practice.

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stomach cancer, cervical cancer and liver cancer — are all linked to infectious diseases.

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Population growth and rapid urbanisation that bring overcrowding and unhygienic conditions will play a role in their spread. Wars, civil strife and natural disasters force migrants or refugees into conditions fertile for infectious disease.

Tamil rebels kill nine in three raids

COLOMBO (R) — Sri Lanka's Tamil Tiger guerrillas, reinforced by 400 trained cadres from the north, launched three raids in the east on Sunday, killing at least nine people, military sources said.

Police intelligence sources said the reinforcements, including "Black Tiger" suicide squads, had arrived in the Trincomalee area late last week under a leader called Swarnan, believed to be their second in overall command.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam attacked an army detachment at Kukulakada, 20 kilometres west of the port of Trincomalee about 2.30 a.m. (2100 GMT on Saturday), killing six sol-

diers, including one officer, the sources said.

Three soldiers were wounded and six were missing.

The rebels also attacked the village, killing two civilians, and blew up two buildings.

An hour earlier, the rebels attacked Kent farm in the northeastern Mullaitivu district, killing one soldier and wounding four soldiers and two home guards, police sources said.

Kent farm was the scene of one of the first village massacres by the LTTE, who have been fighting for a homeland in the north and east since 1983.

At the same time, the Tigers attacked a police post at Pulmodai, 25 kilometres

north of Trincomalee, the third attack in the area in 10 days.

The Tigers fired at least 25 mortar shells wounding five police, the sources said.

Tiger casualties in the three attacks were unknown. The LTTE were not immediately available for comment. The military confirmed there had been some incidents overnight in the east but had no details.

The military last week announced it had taken control of the entire northern Jaffna Peninsula for the first time in almost a decade.

The Tigers ran a virtual mini-state in Jaffna with their own police, courts and administration before being ousted by a series of military offensives which began

late last year.

The operations had sparked fears the rebels would strike back in the thinly held east as well as in the capital Colombo to cut military supply lines and divert attention from Jaffna.

Military analysts said the armed forces, on a roll in Jaffna, may now head south to the mainland Kilinochchi area where the LTTE have set up a new headquarters among the tens of thousands of families displaced by the northern fighting.

"If the army can get the people back to Jaffna then the LTTE would lose their human shield," one analyst said. "They would have precious little left."

Yeltsin to visit Chechnya despite murder plot

MOSCOW (R) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin said on Sunday separatist rebels planned to kill him if he visited Chechnya, but he vowed to go ahead with a pre-election trip to the rebel region to try to end fighting there.

Visiting Siberia in his campaign for re-election on June 16, Yeltsin held out an olive branch to other candidates by again offering a coalition to see off the challenge of Communist Party leader Gennady Zyuganov.

Yeltsin, 65, said the Kremlin knew of plot to kill him in Chechnya but gave no details.

"We know of an assassina-

tion plan," ITAR-TASS news agency quoted him as telling a crowd in Omsk, 2,200 kilometres east of Moscow.

Interfax news agency quoted Yeltsin as saying: "I know that an assassination attempt has been planned against me but I will go to Chechnya because peace must be established there."

Yeltsin's decision to visit Chechnya, where Russian troops have been trying to smash an independence drive for 17 months, signalled his concern over what effect the unpopular conflict is having on his hopes of winning a second term.

By underlining the dangers

of visiting a war zone, he may also be trying to persuade voters he is ready to risk his life in the country's interests.

"I have been flooded with telegrams and telephone calls, urging me not to go. But I believe that only I could sit the sides down at the conference table," Interfax quoted Yeltsin as saying soon after his arrival in Omsk.

Rebel leader Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev said on Friday he did not plan to assassinate Yeltsin. But he said the president would still be risking his life if he visited Chechnya because killing him was a matter of honour

for some Chechens.

More than 30,000 people have been killed and more than 600,000 have been forced from their homes in the fighting.

Yeltsin, who visited the city of Krasnoyarsk on Saturday, travelled to Siberia in the latest stage of an exhausting campaign in which opinion polls suggest he and Zyuganov, 51, are running neck-and-neck and are far ahead of their rivals.

The Kremlin leader again raised the spectre of civil war in Russia if the communists returned to power and said he was the only one who could guarantee stability.

Ireland wins Eurovision song contest for seventh time

OSLO, Norway (AP) — Ireland won the Eurovision song contest late Saturday with the haunting Gaelic-inspired song "The Voice," sung by 23-year-old Eimear Quinn.

Ireland, one of the pre-contest favourites, won the 23-nation event with 162 points. Last year's winner Norway took second with Elisabeth Andreassen's 114 points. Sweden's group One More Time was third with 100 points.

Croatia was fourth with 98 points and Estonia took fifth with 94. Winners are picked by juries from all 23 countries.

The host, the Norwegian state television network NRK, estimated that 300 million people in Europe would watch the live broadcast of the 40th annual contest, called Eurosong '96 this year. Norwegian media said the total number of viewers was probably lower.

Ireland has won the contest seven times, including three times running until Norway won the final in Dublin, Ireland, last year. The expense of arranging the contest so many times had become a concern

to Ireland, since the winning country hosts the next year's final.

Despite the huge audiences, the contest seldom brings lasting fame. The most famous winner was the Swedish group Abba, which sang "Waterloo" for a victory in 1974.

Show host Morten Harket, of the Norwegian pop group Ab-Ha, described the contest as "the European championships of popular music."

The live broadcast from Oslo's 6,000 seat Spektrum Arena was virtually flawless, despite troublesome dress rehearsals that had sent a chill through participants on Friday.

Norwegians, like many Europeans, either love or hate the song contest. In the weeks leading up to the finals, some national newspapers gave "Eurosong haters" their own guest columns to balance the coverage.

The contest was held in Norway this year because it won in Dublin, Ireland, last year with a largely instrumental piece called "Nocturne."



The Irish Eurosong 1996 winner Eimear Quinn (C) waves an Irish flag after claiming victory in the contest together with the rest of the Irish team. From left: conductor Noel Kelehan, violinist Cora Smyth, bouzouki player Niall O Callanain, tin whistle player Conor Byrne, Eimear Quinn, composer Brendan Graham, backing vocalist Aime Leonard and backing vocalist and key board player Ronan Kennedy (Reuters photo)

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation
Established 1971
مجلس التحرير يومية عربية سياسية مستقلة تصدر بالانجليزية في الأردن تأسست 1971

Chairman of the Board of Directors:
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The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.
Subscription and advertising rates are available from the
Jordan Times advertising department.

Reflecting on alternatives

WITH THE Israeli general elections for a new prime minister and new Knesset only nine days away, Prime Minister Shimon Peres appears to be holding a very small lead over his rival Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu. In reality, though, the prime minister's post can go to either candidate depending on what happens between now and the May 29 elections whose outcome may very well determine the course of the peace process and the future of the Middle East.

There are many factors which will seal the results of the elections one way or another. A single suicide attack by Islamic Jihad or Hamas would most probably shift the balance in favour of Netanyahu. For right or wrong, the Likud and their nationalistic right-wing allies sound tougher on the need to protect Israeli security and any bomb attacks on Israeli civilians would reinforce the sentiment for harsher measures, not peaceful overtures, against the Palestinians. It is estimated that on average about 10 per cent of Israeli voters are still uncommitted and they may decide their preferences at a moment's notice.

For its part, Hamas seems to be divided on whether to continue its armed struggle against Israel. While Dr. Mahmoud Zahar, spokesman of Hamas within the Palestinian territories, is calling for a ceasefire lest his group play into the hands of Israeli extremists, there are others in the group who see the issue differently and would go to any length to impose their opinions and beliefs on others. No doubt both sides clearly know that what is at stake is not only the course of the Israeli elections but also the future of the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. What remains to be calculated is the vote of Israeli Arabs who are generally tilted in favour of the Labour Party. There were voices amongst the Arab population calling for casting white ballots or suspending their traditional support for Peres in the aftermath of the Cana massacre last month. But how the Israeli Arabs decide to cast their votes eventually is not certain. We just know that the decision will naturally have a tremendous impact on the future of Israeli politics.

What the Palestinians choose for themselves in the end is of course their business. This is the time, however, for sane and sober reflection and we trust the majority of the Palestinians want to give peace its due chance. Hopefully the two peoples will do what they can to avoid what has to be a catastrophic alternative.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

COMMENTING ON the outcome of an Arab Parliamentary Union (APU) meeting held in Damascus and concluded in Cana last week, a writer for Al Ra'i said Sunday that the Arab parliamentarians' declaration was a symbol of the aspirations of the Arab masses. The APU declaration could initiate a new stage in Arab history because the parliamentarians' call for collective action on the part of the Arab governments to end inter-Arab differences might revive a new spirit within the Arab World for dealing with common threats, said Sultan Al Hattab. Recalling that the Great Arab Revolt of 1916 was triggered by the feeling among the Arab leaders that the time had come for action and that there was need for struggle to achieve freedom and independence, the writer said that the martyrdom of the civilians in Cana and the repression that has been inflicted on the Palestinians and the Arabs around them should motivate the Arabs to act anew and rise in the face of injustice, tyranny and aggression. The writer said that the Arabs should now initiate a battle for restoring Arab Jerusalem and they should start their pursuit for making Jerusalem the capital of the Palestinian state. The writer said that while the Arab masses can only express appreciation of the parliamentarians' declaration, Arab leaders have no alternative but to join their forces and unite their ranks to help achieve the national aspirations.

A WRITER for Al Dustour criticised the Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi for announcing plans to deport more Palestinians living in his country and said that such a move, like the previous deportations, was bound to cause further sufferings to the Palestinians. Qadhafi is claiming that his action was designed to put pressure on Israel and the world community to force them to repatriate the Palestinians, but he is causing more tragedies to the Palestinians who have been denied return to their own homeland for the past half century with the backing of the same world community, said Fakhr Saleh. Does Qadhafi believe that Libya, which is reeling under U.N. sanctions, will convince the world of his unreasonable views and make the world community and Israel respond to his moves and offer aid to the Palestinians? asked the writer. He said that Qadhafi realises, like everyone else, that it is Israel that is standing in the way of the Palestinians' return and that Libyan pressure on Palestinians will achieve nothing in this matter.

Human Rights File

Jordan-IMF agreement touches the economic rights of most of us

By Waleed M. Sa'di

To hear economists explain the economic restructuring programme (ERP) agreed upon by Jordan and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for the purpose of putting the Jordanian house in order and improve its international credit rating, the case for its full and faithful application becomes a straight forward case.

Stating the arguments for the agreement in their simplest form, the government cannot forever spend more than it earns or receives in grants and subsidies for basic commodities and services in the final analysis, help the rich rather than the poor. Of course, there are other elements in the accord, such as the quest for a faster pace in the privatisation process and rendering bureaucracy more efficient.

Perhaps experts exploit laymen's lack of understanding of macro-economics when explaining ERP by over complicating their pitch in defence of the deal, but the fact remains that even the most novice among us would readily appreciate the essence and the raison d'être of the programme if it were only properly explained to us.

After listening attentively to cool presentations on behalf of the accord with the IMF over the course of the past few months, I must admit that I have turned, at least a little bit, from an outright rejectionist of the agreement to a lukewarm convert.

What is keeping me, as like-minded people, from becoming a full subscriber to ERP are two things: first, I would very much like the state to present its case in favour of the agreement with the IMF to the public in a straight forward manner, something which our concerned authorities have not bothered to do till this late hour.

It is conceivable that officials feel that the dynamics of the deal with the IMF are too complicated or too sophisticated for the people to comprehend and that talking with them about it would be like talking way over their heads. In other words, the government feels that it is absolved from the responsibility to "sell" ERP to the masses in an open manner because they are too simple minded on economic matters to appreciate its ABCs.

This is where I believe that the current government, which inherited ERP, as well as all the previous governments, which negotiated or subscribed to it, committed the cardinal sin and ended up changing the issue into a political liability.

I do not believe for a minute that the public as a whole is incapable of understanding that subsidising bread, for example, ends up replenishing the coffers of the rich merchants who could turn around and sell subsidised wheat or flour on the international market at commercial prices and five-star hotels and restaurants who gladly pocket the difference in price.

The greater majority of the people of this country are sophisticated enough to accept the national decision to deprive the middle class and the rich from the benefits of subsidies, provided there is a parallel effort to convince them in a candid manner that the poor would be compensated in a clear and dignified manner for lifting the subsidies.

Yes, there is some talk going on about offering coupons to families earning less than JD 500 per month to enable them to continue to enjoy the benefits of subsidies as before. There is also talk about providing the affected sector of Jordanians with direct cash flows to compensate them for their losses when subsidies are fully and totally lifted. Unfortunately, though, all such talk has not been conducted in the most forthright manner and in a style that the public can understand and relate to.

The roundabout way ERP has been "sold" to the needy amongst us leaves much to be desired and may very well explain why the programme is still viewed with suspicion.

People would also like to be told, amongst other things, why the ceiling of monthly JD 500 income per family has been chosen as the dividing line between the subsidies-deserving people and the not so deserving in the country. Why the 500 figure in the first place and on the basis of what criteria has the government chosen this ceiling?

What constitutes a family and why is a family of ten treated as a family of three? Why not per family monthly

income of JD 750 for example? Has anybody tried to explain the rationale behind the JD 500 amount and not a higher or even lower figure, depending on the size of the family?

This lack of proper communication between the state and citizens is further complicated by the issue of confidence or the lack of it between the two sides. Now we all know that the ERP has been structured on certain premises that have yet to be proven, beyond a shadow of doubt or to the satisfaction of the people most affected by it.

IMF, we are told, took the official data on, inter alia, inflation, poverty and unemployment at face value. For example, IMF is told that the inflation rate in the country runs at about 3 to 4 per cent per annum. There are independent sources which claim that the rate of inflation is much higher than what IMF has been lead to believe and that it may very well be in the double digit bracket. The same goes for the unemployed. The government says that it is about 15 per cent while others allege it is at least double that amount.

The discrepancy between what the government tells the IMF on the vital signs of the national economy and what independent sources claim they are happens because the two sides do not use the same criteria for measuring them. This is where the public needs to be spared the agony of deciphering what they are told by the government and what they may hear from private sources.

There is a case here for a more candid approach to the problem, arising from the conflicting information about the state of the national economy. What I am talking about here certainly touches the essence of the economic rights of the people. As long as the majority of us are left in the dark, as on how ERP affects us in the final analysis, the agreement with IMF will continue to pose a political challenge and could very well turn out to be a political liability that no government can afford to experience.

That is why the case for a more frank discussion about its contents and purpose is very much in order.

What is wrong with Africa?

By Gwynne Dyer

JOSHUA NKOMO, vice-president of Zimbabwe and former guerrilla leader, is an old man now, and very bitter. The Africa whose future he fought for was not supposed to be like this — wars and genocides and poverty and famine, with the epidemic of AIDS to finish things off. So last month, standing beside the open grave of his son, Ernest Thutani, he lost it.

Nkomo, 79, broke with local convention by saying openly that his son had died of AIDS (an estimated 10 per cent of Zimbabweans are HIV positive) — and then he plunged on to say that AIDS was invented by whites to exterminate blacks. "Unfortunately it backfired, because they too are dying of it, but still they have the knowledge of its origins and how it can be cured. But they just do not want to share that knowledge."

The same story is widely believed in black ghettos in the United States, where people cannot see why there is so much misery in their lives unless somebody is actively plotting to hurt them. But why do powerful Africans who lead independent states in a continent where Africans are the overwhelming majority have the same psychology as relatively powerless American ghetto blacks? Because Africa is in such dreadful shape that the same desperate search for reasons is now a major preoccupation of the African intelligentsia. You cannot hide it or deny it any more, so you have to try to explain it. But if it is not white plot, what has gone wrong in Africa? Because something certainly has.

April was Liberia's turn to dominate the bad news from Africa. A peace treaty was supposed to end the seven-year Liberian civil war that has killed 150,000 people and turned over half the 2.3 million population into refugees. Instead, on April 6, the killing exploded again in the streets of the capital, Monrovia.

Monrovia used to boast, with a great deal of poetic licence, that it was the "Manhattan of Africa." It is now Hell on Earth. Sixty thousand well-armed young soldiers of half a dozen different factions have looted everything worth taking, and destroyed the rest. Booting bodies lined the

streets, the 12,000 troops of the West African peace-keeping force were keeping their heads down (or joining in the looting), and the U.N. headquarters had been overrun.

Tens of thousands of refugees have crowded into the diplomatic enclave of Mamba Point on the south side of the city. On May 1, Liberian gunmen from some faction even attacked the U.S. embassy. Marine guards killed three of the attackers, and U.S. Assistant Secretary of State George Moose made a public statement: "We need to make it perfectly clear to the faction leaders... that the course they are pursuing is a course that will put them beyond the pale."

Beyond the pale? He believed that these people care what the rest of the world thinks of them? The Liberian faction leaders and their teenage followers are already so far beyond the pale that they have become the stuff of nightmare — living illustrations of journalist Robert Kaplan's influential thesis that much of the Third World is bound to slide into chaos and chronic savagery.

But Kaplan's evidence is not really about the "Third World" at all. His most lurid and frightening examples almost all come from Africa, for good reason. Sub-Saharan Africa contains only one-tenth of the world's people, but it is home to at least half of its refugees — and practically of its famines.

That is just the part of the problem that grabs the headlines. Even worse than the wars and the genocides, in the long run, is a steady decline in the quality of life for Africans.

A dozen of Africa's 50 countries are exceptions to this generality, but the pattern across the continent for the past 15 to 20 years has been falling primary school enrolments, declining per capita incomes, shrinking road networks, collapsing public services, even shortening life-spans (largely due to AIDS).

All this decay attracts very little outside attention (though Africans certainly notice it, and the well-educated and the talented flee to better jobs in safer places outside Africa). Then, occasionally, yet another African state simply collapses into chaos, and the world takes notice for a

moment.

What obsesses thinking Africans is that no other region of the world shows a similar pattern. Since most of the rest of the world was also conquered by European imperialists, that makes it hard to "blame colonialism" away. There are some Africans still try.

"I had a bizarre response once not so long ago, and from a former head of state, too," Nigerian playwright and Nobel Prize-winner Wole Soyinka told me recently. "He came out with a most outlandish theory that what happened was that the artisans who normally would have become the middle class of Africa were deliberately wiped out by the colonial forces."

Soyinka, like many talented Africans, lives in exile. And like many of his contemporaries, he will no longer put up with the sort of simple-minded explanations of what went wrong in Africa that give comfort to Joshua Nkomo, and to the Nigerian head of state who thought that the colonialists murdered all the African artisans.

"I had to ask his advisers afterwards — I said 'Are you people his think tank? Did you put this together for him as some kind of original way of explaining Africa's dilemma?' Because to the best of my knowledge the artisans were never wiped out as a class."

"But this was his theory, that because the craftsmen who should have become the middle class were wiped out by the colonial powers, this left only the unskilled workers who then went into the army and became the sergeant-majors and then got power. So all of us are busy looking for a theory. I mention this one just to show how desperately we all seek an answer that can be generic to the entire continent, and I'm afraid there isn't any one answer."

Cards on the table. Like most people who love Africa, I am deeply upset by what is happening to the continent. And because of my distress, I am likely to jump at any theory that explains why history is now unfolding so differently in Africa, and so much worse. So be warned — but I think there may be an explanation.

What has gone wrong in Africa? Why is it the one

region of the world where states regularly collapse into anarchy, where per capita food production is falling, where power in many countries literally resides in the barrel of a gun? The question weighs heavily on Africans, but maybe a broader perspective would help.

Imagine, for a moment, that Christopher Columbus had reached the Americas in 1492, and that various European countries then used their technological advantages to set up empires in the new world for a few centuries. That's history — but now imagine that the European newcomers never supplanted the native peoples.

Imagine small European populations living among much larger native majorities along the eastern seaboard of North America and in the southern cone of South America, rather like the situation that currently prevails at the southern end of Africa. But imagine that in the rest of the Western Hemisphere, there is an exclusively Indian population. And now the European empires have finally been driven out. What do the Americas look like?

Think in terms of 50 states, each containing half a dozen tribes. Big tribes, for the population has grown over the centuries: two million Iroquois, a million Mohawks, a million Hurons, half a million Cree, for example — all sharing a country about the size of Angola. What do you think its history would have been over the past few decades? Rather like Angola's, perhaps? spoke to Alfred Crosby, an historian at the University of Texas who specialises in the history of disease. In his book "Ecological Imperialism," he has documented how old world diseases enabled the Europeans not only to conquer the new worlds beyond the seas, but literally to replace the existing populations there.

Estimates of the Indian population of the Americas in 1492 range from 30 to 100 million. Over the next three centuries, no more than 50 million people sailed west across the Atlantic. So why is the population of the Americas now over 85 per cent European, around 10 per cent African, and under 5 per cent indigenous?

In technological and cultural terms, Africa was comparable to the Americas when Columbus set sail. The vast majority of Africans lived in relatively small tribes, though there

Normally, within Eurasia, conquest was a pretty impermanent business. A new ruling aristocracy came in — Moors in Spain, Moguls in India, Mongols in China — and after some centuries they were assimilated or expelled. But the original population remained.

What was different in the Americas (and Australia and New Zealand, too) was that the conquerors arrived with a dozen highly infectious diseases. They were quite new diseases that had evolved over the past 10,000 years in the crowded cities and peasant villages of Europe and Asia, where mass civilisations were the norm and most people lived under the roof with their farm animals, trading diseases back and forth.

Measles, mumps, diphtheria, typhoid, cholera, and above all smallpox were completely unknown in the Americas and Oceania, where most people lived in relatively small tribal groups: 500 Indian nations in North America, 600, 600 different languages among the Australian aborigines. Living conditions there were simply not congested enough to favour the evolution of such lethal diseases.

"They had a different disease environment," said Crosby. "And when some group from the areas of high population density started to move out into the remote areas — it could have been China or India, it happened to be Europe — they had not only technological advantages, but enormous epidemiological advantages: a dozen, 15, 20 diseases which were normal from the Atlantic to the China Sea, but totally unknown in these remote areas."

The natives of the Americas, Australia and New Zealand just had no immunities to Eurasian diseases — and no comparable diseases to send back to Europe. (One possible exception is syphilis). So they were almost exterminated, and largely replaced by the incoming European population. They never got the chance to make their own mistakes. Whereas Africa has.

In technological and cultural terms, Africa was comparable to the Americas when Columbus set sail. The vast majority of Africans lived in relatively small tribes, though there

were occasional larger states like those of the Incas and the Aztecs. In terms of disease, however, Africa was utterly different. Geographically it was part of the old world, joined to Asia and Europe by a land bridge — so its people had exactly the same diseases and immunities as Europeans and Asians (plus some more of their own). Africa was conquered, but its people didn't die.

Africa is not cursed. It is the only region of the old world beyond Eurasia to survive into the present with its indigenous population intact. (The few surviving American Indians and Australian aborigines would give anything to have the same problems). But the down side of Africa's good fortune is that it must reconcile its tribal past with living in modern states.

People talk about how Africa is handicapped by its lack of the deep-rooted cultural traditions that come from living for thousands of years in mass societies, but I wouldn't get carried away with that concept. It doesn't take people long to learn new traditions.

What you can't change so fast is ethnicity, and Africa has a typically "tribal" ethnic pattern: two hundred ethnic groups of over half a million people, not one of which amounts to 5 per cent of the total population. Like the Americas before Columbus.

Thousands of years of empire in Europe and Asia have changed the ethnic map, mashing the old tribes together into ever bigger ethnic groups. Europe has about the same population as Africa, but 75 per cent of its people now belong to only eight ethnic groups. Asia has more people than Africa and Europe put together, but half its people belong to only three ethnic groups.

The same applies in the Americas, Australia, and New Zealand, where only a few European ethnic groups predominate. Africa is the only part of the world trying to make it with such a huge burden of ethnic diversity. Of course it's having a hard time. Who wouldn't?

Africa has to solve an ethnic problem of the sort hardly anybody else has. In the circumstances, it isn't doing that badly at all. And the solutions it eventually evolves may be of use to the rest of the world, too.

Regent meets Singapore minister

(Continued from page 1)

dialogue and economic cooperation through a roundtable conference involving East and West Asia countries.

The Singaporean minister voiced appreciation for Jordan's interest in developing scopes of bilateral cooperation, and praised Jordan's development experience.

In response to the invitation extended to him by the Regent, Mr. Jayakumar paid a visit to Amman to familiarise himself with the situation in the port and to study the possibility of developing its capacity and capabilities to serve as a regional centre for transport and shipping.

Mr. Jayakumar, who arrived here Saturday, leaves Jordan on Monday for Cairo.

Maftaq holds byelection

(Continued from page 12)

The remaining six candidates are: Obeid Tareq Shabael of the Sardiya tribe, Dahash Sharafat of the Sharafat tribe, Abdul Karim Sarhan of the Sarhan tribe, Mahaj Massarah of the Massarah tribe, Mohammad Azamat of the Azamat tribe and Fahd Al Tawafsheh of the Tawafsheh tribe.

Nawaf, Qadi, 73, died of heart attack minutes after endorsing the government in a speech in Parliament on March 2.

By-elections were held in Balqa to fill the seat of Deputy Ibrahim Shihdeh who passed away in January. Hani Abbadi, 42, an independent collected 7,325 votes which secured him the seat.

Under the Constitution, when a seat in the Lower House becomes vacant because of death, resignation, or any other reason, a by-election will be held within two months of formal notification to the government by Parliament.

According to the election law, winners of the by-elections will retain seats in parliament until the end of the term of that parliament.

IAF urges U.S. to better ties

(Continued from page 1)

The letter, using flowery language to praise the United States, appeared aimed at urging Washington to free Musa Abu Marzouk, political leader of the militant Hamas movement who was arrested in New York last July for alleged terrorism, a U.S. court has cleared his extradition to Israel.

"We call on you to work toward releasing Musa Abu Marzouk as a step towards understanding based on justice and mutual respect," the letter said.

The IAF is a fiery critic of Washington's Middle East policy, which it regards as biased in favour of Israel and aimed at controlling Arab oil wealth.

The letter harshly rebuked Israel and blamed it for displacing millions of Palestinians, and influencing U.S. policy against Arabs and Muslims.

"But Arab and Muslim relations with the United States are deep-rooted, more lasting and greater than that between the United States and the Zionist intruders in this region," it said.

In a separate statement, the IAF urged Prime Minister Abdul Karim Al Kabarti "to exert special effort in order not to have (Abu Marzouk) handed over to Israeli authorities."

A federal judge ruled this month that Mr. Abu Marzouk could be extradited to Israel, saying he was involved in an "agreement to accomplish an unlawful act" — the element necessary to hold him responsible for violence carried out by Hamas.

Mr. Abu Marzouk, 45, who has a home and business in Virginia, denies being involved in anything but politics and is appealing against the extradition ruling.

Dozens of Israelis have been killed in suicide bombings by Hamas' military wing since 1993 when the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel signed an interim peace deal.

The IAF is a vehement supporter of Hamas, which has vowed to sabotage the deal.

Iraq to announce decision

(Continued from page 1)

Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz said that Iraq hoped that the talks with the United Nations on partial oil sales would eventually lead to an agreement.

Mr. Le Pen also said Mr. Aziz told him that he wished friendly countries like France would exert diplomatic efforts to make the deal a reality.

In another development, Iraq called for patching up relations with Syria in order to "defeat" the enemies of the Arabs.

"It's not important to know who will make the first step towards reconciliation between both countries as long as the goal is to achieve real Arab solidarity, whose pillars are Iraq and Syria," Babel newspaper said.

"Arab solidarity is needed to counter current and future challenges as well as defeat the calculations of the enemies of the Arabs," according to the newspaper, run by President Saddam's eldest son Uday.

Israel, Syria trade charges

(Continued from page 1) operating against Israeli forces from a "built-up area."

"First of all what happened today was certainly not a violation of the understanding (ceasefire) from our side ... in this incident they operated from a built-up area and withdrew to a village full of civilians," Israel's coordinator of Lebanon policy Uri Lubrani told army radio. Sheikh Nabil Oaouk, Hizbollah's top official in South Lebanon, said in a statement earlier.

"What happened today ... is an aggression against civilians and a clear and unjustified violation of the spirit and text of the April understanding."

Lebanese security sources said Israeli tanks fired solid shells carrying no explosives or fuses into South Lebanon villages.

It was the first time Israel fired at civilian areas since the ceasefire, which bans firing from or at civilian targets on both sides of the border

but does not cover guerrilla attacks against an Israeli-occupied zone and gives the sides the right of self-defence.

"I think that Hizbollah cannot hide behind civilian populations. And as long as it will do that then it is responsible if there are civilian casualties," Israel's chief peace negotiator Uri Savir told reporters.

"Ultimately, the real problems of Lebanon will be dealt with by negotiations for peace between us and them and also in the broader context between Israel and Syria," Mr. Savir added.

Sunday's hostilities erupted with a clash involving machine-gun and rocket-propelled grenade fire at 8:10 a.m. (0510 GMT) near the Israeli-held Beaufort Castle in the village of Anoun in the central sector of the Israeli-occupied border enclave.

The wounded soldier was airlifted in an Israeli army helicopter to Israel for treatment, sources said.

Serial killings become normal part of S. African life

By Glenn McKenzie
Agence France-Presse

JOHANNESBURG — Ten multiple murderers are on the loose or in custody and two new culprits are surfacing every year as serial killing becomes a way of life in post-apartheid South Africa.

Police psychologist Micki Pistorius told AFP that half of all known serial killers in South Africa's history have been committed since 1991.

The dramatic increase in multiple sex-killings prompted Johannesburg columnist Frith Harris this week to write an article in the Citizen newspaper on "how to avoid serial killers and rapists."

"I really just wanted to give women some tips that will make them more comfortable and safe," Harris said. "Women are very afraid and paranoid at the moment."

The words "serial killer" barged into the South African vocabulary in 1994, when police discovered 11 bodies over a six-month period of semi-naked women on mine dumps and in bushes around Johannesburg; all had been strangled with their own underwear.

In December 1994, police finally arrested a suspect, David Selepe, who they

said confessed to the killings.

Selepe, however, was shot dead just days after his arrest after police claimed he tried to escape when they took him to the scene of some of the murders.

With his death, police closed the files and women breathed easier.

Within months, however, more bodies were found — all killed in the method favoured by Selepe.

Over the next 10 months, police found a total of 38 bodies of women — all of them strangled — in the Pretoria area and near Boksburg, east of Johannesburg.

With the "help" of international investigators, they finally pounced, announcing in October last year that they had arrested Moses Sithole in connection with the 38 killings, 40 rapes and six robberies; he is due to appear in court Monday.

Other suspected killers include Samuel Jacques Coetzee, a 25-year-old transvestite who was arrested last month and accused of five grisly deaths in the Johannesburg-Pretoria region; he is awaiting trial.

Earlier this year, Christopher Zikode was arrested and charged with raping and murdering 18 people in the tiny village of Donnybrook, in the province of

Kwazulu-Natal.

In Cape Town, police have just found the strangled body of a prostitute; they believe she is the 19th victim of the man dubbed the "Cape Town strangler."

Ms. Pistorius believes the recent spate of serial killings may be partly the result of South Africa's high crime rate.

"We are seeing a lot more (serial killings) recently," said Ms. Pistorius. "And our high crime society may be causing some killers to act on their impulses."

The serial killings have increased the stress levels, particularly those of women, of a nation already struggling with some of the worst murder, robbery, car-jacking and rape statistics in the world.

Columnist Harris advises women to avoid strangers who promise them money or jobs; they should also never get into an elevator with a strange man, she added.

"If you have to, stand at the controls and ask him (the stranger) his floor number before you press yours. If you feel uncomfortable, get out as soon as possible," she wrote.

Professor Tuviv Zabow, a forensic psychiatrist at the University of Cape Town, believes sensational media coverage of serial killings may only whet the appetites

of "copy-cat" killers.

"They watch the media very closely to see what is being said about them," he said. "You don't want to give them too many ideas, and you don't want to encourage them."

Prof. Zabow believes sadistic serial killings may also be a result of South Africa's recent exposure to pornography and sexually explicit films, which were banned or censored during the apartheid era.

"In psychiatry, we have a term for so-called serial killings — sadistic, sexual homicides," he said. "People who are capable of committing these crimes are more likely to do so in a sexual permissive society."

Ms. Pistorius, meanwhile, believes psychologists should be trained to detect a possible sex murderer as often they come to seek counselling.

Despite setbacks, South African police have been unusually successful in catching serial killers, said Ms. Pistorius.

Authorities around the world normally take between seven and 17 years to catch serial killers, she said. South African police meanwhile, managed to capture Selepe after only six months.

Israel is on full alert

(Continued from page 1)

"Abu-Wardah recruited the three suicide bombers who carried out attacks in Jerusalem and Ashkelon."

Shortly after the bombings, Mr. Abu Wardah was arrested by Palestinian police and revealed Mr. Salameh's identity, the sources said. Mr. Abu Wardah was given a life sentence in a Palestinian court in March for recruiting the three bombers.

Two weeks ago, Mr. Salameh's brother Akram, a high-level Hamas activist, was arrested in the Gaza Strip and gave authorities information about his brother, the Haaretz newspaper reported Sunday.

While Palestinian and Israeli authorities hunted for Mr. Salameh, he apparently continued to plan attacks and

maintain contacts with Hamas activists. Sources said his arrest was linked to the cracking of a Hamas cell in Jerusalem that assisted the suicide bombers.

Israeli troops stopped a car carrying Mr. Salameh at a routine roadblock in the West Bank town of Hebron, but as they neared the car Mr. Salameh pulled out a gun and fled.

They opened fire, seriously wounding him in the legs and abdomen, but were unable to capture him. He was discovered at the nearby Ali Hospital where he was operated on in the presence of Israeli army doctors.

Israeli Television said Mr. Salameh begged Palestinian doctors to let him die before the operation so he would not fall into the hands of the

Israeli army.

After surgery he was transferred to the Hadassa, Ein Karem Hospital in Jerusalem.

In addition to Mr. Defi, two Palestinians from the village of Dahariya near Hebron are being hunted by the Israeli army which considers the men "walking time-bombs" which could cause severe casualties in Israel in "the near future."

Gen. Dayan said the Palestinian territories had been tightened "to prevent attacks in coming days," adding that only Palestinian leaders, along with food and medicine, would be allowed into the territories from Israel.

Israel imposed the economically-crippling closure, which has prevented tens of thousands of Palestinians from reaching their jobs in the Jewish state, on Feb. 25 the first day of four

suicide bomb attacks by Hamas and the smaller Islamic Jihad which left more than 60 dead.

Another wanted Hamas member, Razik Al Rajoub, from Dura near Hebron, was arrested by soldiers at the roadblock who also found three pistols and some hand grenades in the car.

Two of Mr. Rajoub's brothers and four others from Dura were arrested Saturday on suspicion of complicity.

Mr. Salameh is lying in a hospital bed just metres away from an Israeli victim of one of the suicide bombings he allegedly planned, a newspaper reported.

Danah Shimshon, who was seriously wounded in the bomb attack against a bus in Jerusalem in February, said she was "flabbergasted" to find out that Dr. Salameh was so close to her in the surgical unit of Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem.

Thank you, minister of interior

By Dr. Abdullah Khateeb

WORKERS IN the voluntary sector should now thank Minister of Interior Awad Khleifat. Their continuous suffering, which started in 1966, has now stopped. This suffering started with the enactment of the Voluntary Societies Law in 1966. Since then, complaints about the law from workers in the voluntary sector have been unrelenting because the law stipulated that the minister of social development should have the local governors' approval before accepting the membership of persons elected to boards of voluntary societies and federations.

Throughout my work in the voluntary sector, I have called for amending the law and, mainly, for having the final say regarding membership in boards of general assemblies of societies through elections. Thus, there would be no justification for seeking the approval of the minister of social development and the governors who used to refer the issue to security departments which very often disapproved the membership of some elected persons.

Since the minister of social development is committed to implementing the law, we suggest that he refer the issue to the Ministry of Justice instead of the security departments. Despite the clarity of the issue, things have been pending because no measures were taken even though this law was exploited by some workers at the Ministry of Social Development to terminate the membership of some leading personalities in the voluntary sector.

Unfortunately, such practices went on even after the start of the democratisation process and the need arose to ensure the independence of the voluntary sector and preserve the dignity

of the elected boards of societies.

The wise stand of the minister of interior was taken to bring such a practice to an end and to affirm that the minister of social development does not have to ask for the approval of security departments, after electing society boards. The minister of social development, according to Dr. Khleifat's decision, can take the appropriate decision which will clearly benefit the voluntary sector.

After the decision was issued, the ministry of interior passed 34 cases which had not been approved earlier. The former minister of social development had suspended any action on these cases, which proves our point on the issue and which required such a clear decision by Dr. Khleifat, which is welcome even if it came 30 years late.

I can never be grateful enough to this man by thanking him for taking the decision. In the name of workers in the voluntary sector, I thank him not only for this decision, but also for other steps which reflect his sincere wish to serve his country. No one else, I believe, can rise above this man's actions and his true belonging proved by his actions.

Clearly, when there is difficulty in the process of institution-building as is the case at this stage, it is the real men who can help effect the desired changes. This makes us call for having a civilised law governing the work of voluntary societies, a law that conforms to the rules of democracy and which preserves the rights of citizens.

The writer is president of the General Union of Voluntary Societies. This article is translated from the Arabic daily Al-Dustour.

Medway Service to start operations in the region

After having launched Medway Service (Mediterranean/Far East) in 1993, Pacway/Asiapac (Far East/Pacific North West Coast) in 1994 and Neuway/Seaway (North Europe/Far East) early this year, Lloyd Triestino is pleased to announce the start of the Medipag service between the Mediterranean and Red Sea.

Arabian Gulf, India and Pakistan. Medipag Service will have a fortnightly frequency and will be run with three full-container self-sustained vessels of about 1,000 slots each with direct calls at Ancona, Koper, Trieste, Laraca, Jeddah, Dubai, Karachi and Nhava Sheva. The three vessels (Nuova Adria, Nuova Asia and Nuova Ionia) will complete their round trip in 39 days.

The service will start with Nuova Adria on 8/5/96 from Ancona, followed by Nuova Asia 13 days later, Nuova Ionia, now being delivered brand new from the yard, will have her maiden voyage when entering into service at the beginning of June.

Service between India/Pakistan/Gulf and west Mediterranean ports will be performed in cooperation with Medway vessels via Trieste and Laraca. Laraca will also become Lloyd Triestino gateway to Turkey, the Black Sea, and east Mediterranean, while, at the

other end of the trade, the most important destinations in the Gulf will be served via Dubai. The Medipag service will connect Agaba with the ports of Italy, southern France, Spain, Slovenia, and the sub-continent. The range of services offered will be extended to all the inland container depots in India and Pakistan through the ports on

Nhava Sheva and Karachi. This service underlines Lloyd Triestino's commitment in terms of modernisation, rationalisation and reliability in a market where it has been present with its vessels and its trades for over one century, since the first call of its steam-ship "Apis" in India in 1870.



LLOYD TRIESTINO SERVICES

MEDITERRANEAN

Vessels Name	Voy No.	VALENCIA	Barcelona	FOS	La Spezia	Ancona	Koper	VENICE	Trieste	LARNACA	AQABA
NUOVA ADRIA	G001	2/5/96	30/04/96	29/04/96	27/04/96	8/5/96	9/5/96	10/5/96	10/5/96	14/05/96	24/05/96
NUOVA ASIA	G002	16/05/96	14/05/96	13/05/96	11/5/96	21/05/96	22/05/96	22/05/96	22/05/96	27/05/96	4/6/96
NUOVA IONIA	G003	23/05/96	21/05/96	20/05/96	18/05/96	3/6/96	4/6/96	4/6/96	4/6/96	9/6/96	19/06/96
NUOVA ADRIA	G004	3/6/96	1/6/96	31/05/96	29/05/96	16/06/96	17/06/96	17/06/96	17/06/96	22/06/96	1/7/96

SUB CONTINENT

Vessels Name	Voy No.	KARACHI	Nhava Sheva	KANDLA	COCHIN	JEDDAH	AQABA
NUOVA ADRIA	G001	26/05/96	29/05/96	29/05/96	29/05/96	8/6/96	15/06/96
NUOVA ASIA	G002	8/6/96	11/6/96	11/6/96	21/06/96	21/06/96	28/06/96
NUOVA IONIA	G003	21/06/96	24/06/96	24/06/96	24/06/96	4/7/96	11/7/96
NUOVA ADRIA	G004	4/7/96	7/7/96	7/7/96	7/7/96	17/07/96	24/07/96

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Arab Gulf states seek unified investment law

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab Gulf states have drawn up plans to unify their investment laws to attract foreign capital and repair economic damage caused by weak oil prices, officials and the press reported Sunday.

The six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, once among the biggest capital exporters in the world, have completed a draft law that will govern foreign investment in the region and attract the much-needed technology.

United Arab Emirates (UAE) finance ministry sources confirmed a report by the local Al Bayan newspaper that GCC economic and financial experts would meet next month to put the final touches on the draft law before presenting it to their finance and economy ministers for endorsement.

Al Bayan published the text of the new investment law which was prepared by the Riyadh-based GCC secretariat and the Gulf Organisation for Industrial Consultancy, an official adviser on industrial policies in the Gulf region.

"This new law is intended to lure in foreign investment, narrow the gap between incentives, facilities and exemptions offered to foreign investors, achieve fair distribution of these investments and ensure economic integration among member states," the GCC secretariat said in the text.

It said priority would be given to projects that will help GCC countries in lessening reliance on imports, expanding their productive base, ensuring training and jobs for nationals, and increasing their non-oil exports.

The new law empowered authorities to exempt some foreign enterprises from the minimum 51 per cent local partnership, which has been in force in most member states since the economic and defence alliance was created in 1981.

Exemptions also cover income taxes and other duties for five years, which could be extended in some cases. The law also includes exemption of tariffs on the import of equipment and other materials needed for the project.

"Under the new law, project owners could also be provided with energy and raw materials at subsidised prices," the GCC secretariat said.

GCC states— Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman and the UAE—have sought to unify their investment rules over the past years as part of their 1983 economic agreement that calls for the creation of a common Gulf market.

Once major capital exporters, the six members are gradually becoming net capital importers as they need technology for the

development of an industrial base and diversification of their oil-dependent economies.

Oil exports provide more than 80 per cent of the total income of the GCC countries and their decline over the past decade has created a persistent deficit in their budgets and slowed down economic growth.

This has forced the alliance, which controls around 45 per cent of the world's proven oil reserves, to embark on reforms, including the privatisation of some public institutions.

Experts said they believed the new investment law, which calls for the creation of a GCC investment committee, would not woo in large funds unless member states give more concessions in terms of local partnership.

"GCC states are among the most attractive countries for foreign capital given their cheap energy and labour and their location in the heart of a vast consumer market. Their liberal economic policies and freedom of capital transfer are also tempting for investors," an Abu Dhabi-based economist said.

"But they need to give foreigners the right to fully own the project. Industrial countries have often called for the modification of the current investment laws on the grounds they are restrictive."

Americas vow banking, capital markets reform

NEW ORLEANS (R) — Finance ministers from the Americas Saturday promised to continue economic reforms, strengthen banking supervision and improve capital markets to reduce the risk of another Mexican-style financial upheaval.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin told reporters on the final day of a summit of finance chiefs a priority was also to generate faster growth that benefited all the hemisphere.

But he said the region's countries needed to focus on strong reform policies and live within their means so that economies do not become unbalanced and spin off into crisis.

The United States, he said, intended to keep its own house in order by working to cut its troublesome budget deficit and increasing the attractiveness of savings in the region, which has low savings levels in contrast to the economies of Asia.

Mr. Rubin took the opportunity to make a pitch for a proposed U.S. inflation-indexed bond, announced before he travelled to the meeting, saying it could increase savings in the United States by providing good rates at less risk.

"It's a better vehicle for savings because of the protections it affords and could increase savings," he said.

Mr. Rubin praised Mexico for taking tough measures following the peso crisis last year that required a \$50 billion international rescue

package led by the United States.

But he said that if Mexico's problems had been caught earlier by better disclosure, such as a new system being devised by the International Monetary Fund to make economic indicators more open, the worst might have been avoided.

"If that had been in existence before the Mexican crisis, investors would have pulled back a lot earlier, the situation never would have built up to the extent it did (and) we might have avoided the crisis," he said.

Besides increased and prompt disclosure giving investors more time to judge economic conditions, the officials from 27 countries, some well off and some very poor, agreed that their banking systems need strengthened supervision.

"We must solve the problem of supervision in our banking systems," said Venezuelan Finance Minister Luis Raul Matos Azocar, whose country suffered its worst financial collapse in 1994. "Almost every Latin American country has gone through the experience of what can happen if you don't pay great attention to technical ability and real supervision."

In their talks, the officials reaffirmed the importance of maintaining strong pressure on money laundering since it can infect capital markets and cause problems in the long run.

Treasury undersecretary Jeffrey Shafer told Reuters fi-

nancial television the countries were implementing a system of teams to track attempts at money laundering.

In addition, the Inter-American Development Bank is slated to provide training to upgrade banking and securities markets supervision in the region.

Some of the largest Latin American economies are still dealing with festering banking crises brought on by ei-

ther a lack of skilled supervision or by dragging their feet on clearly needed reforms to rein in political influence.

Latin American finance ministers warned Friday that economic reforms undertaken by most Latin American countries must go hand in hand with better living conditions for the region.

"If the people do not see concrete results (from the re-

forms) that improve their lives, it will be very hard to get support for the necessary adjustments," Mexican Finance Minister Guillermo Ortiz told the finance ministers and central bank presidents from the 27 countries of the Americas.

In round table discussions, ministers and bank presidents agreed that Latin American finance ministers warned Friday that economic reforms undertaken by most Latin American countries must go hand in hand with better living conditions for the region.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR MONDAY, MAY 20, 1996

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Don't let on older individual from out of town take up too much of your time. Go quietly about your business and by your hard efforts you will be successful. Later tonight take some time to be with your loved ones.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Don't go out for expensive pleasures at this time. Improve your appearance and get new clothing you need for your career activities. Later tonight is the time for your handle any pressing duties which have been put aside.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) There is much to do about your home and family today, so don't permit a depressed fellow associate to interfere. Later tonight you can make contact with a knowledgeable person who has the answers to any business questions.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Take time from today regular career activities so that you can run errands and shop for necessities in the morning. Later this evening it will be a good time for you to be with your loved one, involved in some enjoyable activity.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Begin the week properly today by knowing what your financial status is and solve any burdensome affairs which you may have at this time. It is a good time tonight for you to proceed with some important career activity.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You are a perfectionist and you want everything around you to be at its best, so work for this goal at this time. This evening you can go out on the town with some close friends and have a wonderful time in each others company.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Get into private career activities today which need to be completed on which you have been procrastinating, and they are soon behind you. Tonight will be a good time for you and your loved ones to enjoy some family activities.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Think of those persons who have done you favours and try to do something nice for them at this time. You can later tonight get the assistance of a knowledgeable person, who can help with a new important project.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Use tact and diplomacy in any outside career activities which you perform today. Keep of any obstacles especially when you are involved with any important project, which is under the observation of any authority figure.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You have a new plan which is appealing but should be given study today if you are to gain the right benefits from it. At this time you can consult with a knowledgeable person who can give you some good ideas for some new project.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Your hunches could be erroneous today, so use only your mature judgement in any business deals since your natural instincts have not failed you before. Later tonight you will enjoy the company of good friends out on the town.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Endeavour to keep promises you have made to others, especially fellow associates who can be of great help and be very careful of vital details for best results on whatever your career activities may well be.

Birthstone of May: Emerald — Citrine

New Indian finance chief woos and warns investors

NEW DELHI (R) — India's finance minister, Manmohan Singh, has opened his arms to foreign investors and endorsed his predecessor's pathbreaking economic reforms.

"But the former career army officer's free-trade agenda is laced with a dose of protectionism which his Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) says is needed to defend the South Asian nation against 'predatory' multinationals."

Mr. Singh, who last week succeeded Manmohan Singh at the helm of the powerful finance ministry, spent much of his first two days in office communicating the new government's economic priorities to the outside world.

Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee has until May 31 to prove a majority in a hung parliament. Mr. Singh wasted no time reassuring foreign investors the right-wing party is no enemy.

"For the entrepreneurs of the world I have only one thing to say: Invest in India and you will reap benefits that no investment has ever given you," Mr. Singh told Reuters in a weekend interview.

But he added: "Do not invest simply in a project in India."

India's first Hindu nationalist government may end up to be the shortest lived in the country's history.

But Mr. Singh will have

made it clear that while the BJP is not uncomfortable with foreigners' money, the party wants to make sure investment helps the common citizen.

"I do not want to restrict the flow of money into India," he said. "But I do wish to provide a certain amount of protection to the unavoidable predatory instincts that accompany money."

Mr. Singh promised to look at company law so that "predatory takeovers" by cash-rich multinationals do not become routine. He said sovereign counter-guarantees protecting private firms' investments in big projects were a thing of the past.

Foreign investment, he said, was welcome but should

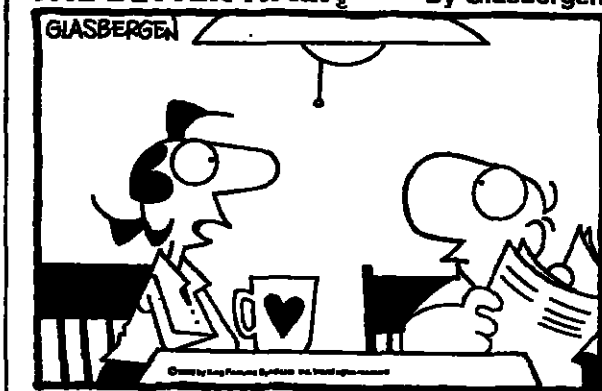
be channelled first into capital intensive, high technology projects to overhaul India's infrastructure including power, telecommunications, roads and ports.

Mr. Singh promised deregulation, de-

bureaucratisation and decentralisation of the federal government's powers to states.

"I would say that real economic reforms would start now," he said. "It's the freeing of the spirit of India."

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



THE Daily Crossword by Harvey Chew

ACROSS

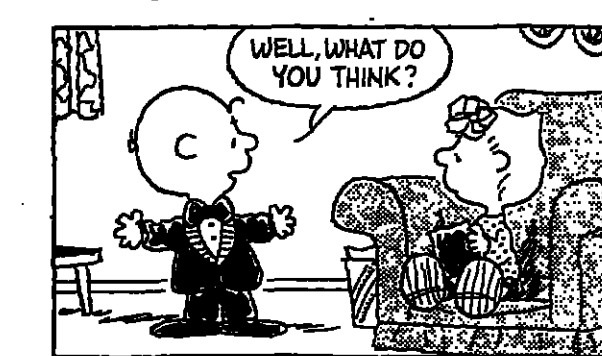
- Very short distance
- Embraces
- up (bungle)
- Queue, to
- Gothamites
- Annoy
- Geisha's sash
- Gleason catch phrase
- A Chaney
- Linguini
- Makes lace
- Mt. Rushmore site: abbr.
- British guns
- Propels in a high arc
- Tell
- Giraffe's cousin
- Click beetle
- Cut
- Gun gp.
- Helper
- Sunday dinner?
- Ripener
- Fiat fish
- Revolver
- Inventor
- Aptitude
- Squash, e.g.
- Card game
- Bomb or detector
- 1914 battle site
- Musical ending
- River to the Rhine
- Automaton
- Black cuckoo
- "Ireland forever"
- Minister: abbr.
- Tire
- Light color
- Timetable abbr.
- Ancient ascetic
- Storage structure

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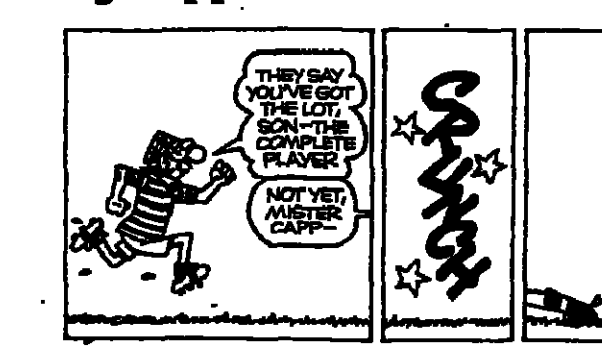
DOWN

- Light blow
- Turner of song
- Football players
- Fuel
- Auditor, at times
- Philippine island
- Nile dam site
- Hats
- Cribbage needs
- Box office sign
- "OOT" film
- Submarine
- Some coats
- not, want not
- Bribe
- King's forte
- Circuit
- Bring up
- Director Kazan
- Famous bareback rider
- Devoured
- Whiskery pat
- Met
- Landlord's due
- Comic Johnson
- Spinners
- Wing
- Billiards item
- Bitter
- River to the Volga
- Frighten
- Painter of "Water Lilies"
- Goffer
- Palmer
- King Lear's daughter
- Macaws
- Bauxite and hematite
- German composer
- Goliwogg
- Dull sound
- Before
- Corrida cheer

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n Jeff



JUMBLE.

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

SHAMC
TEBER
ASANUE
SCYTIK

Answer here: THEY

Yesterday's Jumbles: PAUSE MOUSY PEOPLE LIMBER

Answer: What the plumber's wife wore to the ball — A PAIR OF PUMPS

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by Henri Arnold and Mike Argison



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

Dubai shipyard reports surge in business

DUBAI (AFP) — The Dubai shipyard in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has reported an increase in business in the past fiscal year, maintaining its position as the third biggest drydock in the world.

The shipyard, a government-controlled venture, repaired and maintained 193 oil tankers and other vessels with a total deadweight of 18 million tonnes during the year which ended in February, compared with 163 ships in the previous year, its chief executive, Earnest Ware, said.

The operations in the past year covered 23 oil tankers with a weight of more than 300,000 tonnes each and 38 tankers weighing over 150,000 tonnes each, Mr. Ware told Emirates Today economic weekly.

"The Dubai drydock is the third biggest in the world and we are trying to maintain our market share of 33 per cent," he said.

The shipyard, set up in early 1980s, had invested large funds over the past few years in an expansion to serve bigger tankers.

Officials said the expansion had enabled the drydock to receive one-million-tonne tankers.

Dubai, the second biggest and wealthiest emirate in the UAE, reported record activity at its shipyard during the 1980-1988 war between Iran and Iraq as it provided services to hundreds of tankers hit during the conflict.

Jordanian drug company wins FDA approval to sell medicine in U.S.

AMMAN (R) — A Jordanian pharmaceutical company said Sunday it had won approval to export to the United States and had registered its first product, an anti-inflammatory drug called Nopain, with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Samieh Darwazah, head of the privately owned Al Hikma Pharmaceutical — with an annual \$60 million turnover and exports to China, Europe, North Africa and the Middle East — said the approval would allow them to sell directly to the United States.

"With this, we became the first Arab pharmaceutical company whose plant has won approval by the U.S. to export its medicines to the United States and its first product has been registered there," he told Reuters.

Volkswagen to invest \$740m in Dead Sea magnesium project

WOLFSBURG, Germany (AFP) — Volkswagen is to invest about \$740 million with an Israeli company, Dead Sea Works Ltd., to extract and process magnesium from the Dead Sea, the German car maker said.

Volkswagen said that the investment was the biggest ever made by a European company in Israel and would create a major force in the production of magnesium which is used in light alloys for the car industry.

The new business, which is to be based at S'Dom on the Dead Sea, is to manage production and supplies of magnesium.

V.W., which is the biggest car manufacturer in Europe, is to own 65 per cent of the operation and the Israeli company 35 per cent.

The first stage would involve investment of \$390 million. In the second stage \$300 million would be invested, and then \$50 million to establish a factory to produce magnesium cast under pressure.

Magnesium, a light metal, is abundant in the Dead Sea which is the lowest point in the world, lying at a depth of 400 metres (1,300 feet) below sea level.

Clinton requests \$50m to help Israel counter terrorism

U.S. PRESIDENT Bill Clinton has sent a fiscal year 1997 budget amendment to the Congress in support of the Israeli government's requirement for counter-terrorism assistance.

The proposal would provide \$50 million that would allow for the acquisition and provision of goods, services, and/or grants to Israel to support the eradication of terrorism.

This request is part of a \$100 million assistance package that President Clinton previously announced.

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DAILY BUSINESS BEAT

A review of news from the Arabic press

United Insurance Company boosts premium earnings by 74 per cent

☆ PREMIUMS EARNED by the United Insurance Company last year were 74 per cent higher than the premiums earned in 1994 as they totalled JD 5.77 million in 1995 compared to JD 3.3 million in the preceding year.

According to the company's annual report, paid claims were also higher at JD 2.95 million last year compared to JD 1.9 million in 1994. By taking into account a JD 119,147 income from rents and investment returns as well as various expenses, the pretax profit amounted to JD 565,763 (JD 489,829 in 1994). Of the remaining JD 378,000 after tax profit, the general assembly has authorised the company's management to distribute JD 180,000 in dividends to the shareholders at a rate of 12 per cent and to allocate the balance to various reserves. Other than the paid claims, the company reported that reserves of outstanding claims at the end of the year 1995 were JD 1.4 million (JD 803,538 in 1994) and reserves for unexpected risks were JD 1.8 million (JD 1 million in 1994). The financial results of each department were as follows:

- JD 85,000 net income generated by the fire department, JD 20,000 less than the net income in 1994
- JD 101,000 net income from the maritime department (JD 93,000 in 1994).
- JD 24,000 from the general accidents departments (JD 27,000 in 1994).
- JD 14,000 from the life and health department (JD 50,000 in 1994).

The net income from the vehicles department amounted to JD 223,000 compared to JD 100,000 in 1994 but board chairman Raouf Abu Jaber told the general assembly that the vehicles department did not perform as good as it should. He attributed that to the higher number of accidents and the rise in repair costs noting that insurance charges in the Palestinian territories and in Israel were 20 times higher than the charges in Jordan where the government still insists on keeping the present rates.

(A source at the company clarified to the Jordan Times that Dr. Abu Jaber's statement referred to claims that were related to car accidents and were still outstanding at the end of last year).

The company paid JD 2.2 million to reinsurance companies last year for sharing the risks but still retention of premiums stood at JD 3.6 million compared to JD 1.7 million in 1994. Total assets grew from JD 4.8 million to JD 6.6 million (Al Ra'i + Al Dostour + Al Aswaj).

Financial Markets

Foreign Exchange Market Summary (May 13 — May 17, 1996)

AMMAN — The U.S. unit appreciated moderately against the other major currencies last week. It ended the week 1.23 per cent, 0.49 per cent and 0.28 per cent higher against the yen, sterling and the mark respectively.

The U.S. unit appreciated against sterling and the mark Monday and depreciated marginally against the yen. The appreciation of the dollar was mainly attributed to mark cross selling which resulted from comments by the Bundesbank president indicating his satisfaction with the current exchange rate levels. The Bundesbank president's remarks stimulated traders' speculation that Germany was opting for a weak mark in order to increase its chances of meeting the fiscal requirements of joining the EMU in 1999.

The dollar rose noticeably against the yen and marginally against the mark Tuesday and stabilised against sterling. The dollar rose against the yen upon dealers' expectations that the Bank of Japan will not raise interest rates in the near future. In addition, the dollar received support against other major currencies after the release of the April consumer price index. The April index showed an overall growth of 0.4 per cent. The core index, excluding food and energy components, rose by a mere 0.1 per cent.

The dollar continued appreciating noticeably against the yen and marginally against sterling Wednesday, while it depreciated slightly against the mark. Analysts indicated that the dollar rose against the yen following comments by Bank of Japan officials, indicating that interest rates will not be raised in the near term. In addition, the governor of Bank of Japan supported the U.S. treasury secretary's repeated calls for a stronger dollar, which encouraged traders to take long dollar positions.

The U.S. unit depreciated slightly against other major currencies Thursday. Analysts indicated that the dollar went down after heavy profit-taking. On the other hand, the dollar resumed its upward trend against other major currencies, at the end of the week. The release of economic data by the U.S. Commerce Department prompted this latest dollar rally. The first quarter statistics showed a 25 per cent decrease in the U.S. trade deficit with Japan, in comparison to last year's figures. However, the dollar later came under some pressure, due to dollar selling for the yen by Japanese exporters.

The U.S. unit, thus, ended the week at 1.5339 marks, 106.80 yen and at \$1.5130 to the pound.

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.7080	0.7100
Sterling Pound	1.0706	1.0760
Deutsche Mark	0.4610	0.4633
Swiss Franc	0.5605	0.5633
French Franc	0.1361	0.1368
Japanese Yen*	0.6621	0.6654
Dutch Guilder	0.4126	0.4147
Swedish Krona	-	-
Italian Lira*	0.0457	0.0459

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
MOONING BANK CENTER AMMAN - JORDANIAN											
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179											
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 19/05/1996											
DATE 12 MONTHS	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF SHARES	NO. OF TRADING	VALUE TRADED	OFFER PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE		
4.890	4.180	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	13.6	3.11	12	3427	15278	4.41	4.40	0.01	0.01
2.750	2.350	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	11.4	5.92	3	1000	7350	2.37	2.35	0.02	0.02
3.040	2.600	JOR. KUWAIT BANK	20.1	0.00	2	3022	8434	2.80	2.76	0.04	0.04
1.510	1.280	JOR. GULF BANK	8.1	0.00	2	250	245	1.03	1.03	0.00	0.00
4.180	3.300	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	19.2	0.00	14	4756	18997	2.00	1.98	0.02	0.02
4.000	2.420	JOR. AL-HAL (BETHA)	2.6	0.00	8	1000	2804	3.72	2.81	0.91	0.91
1.160	1.410	AMMAN BANK INV.	0	0.00	30	40850	20873	1.49	1.51	0.02	0.02
1.930	1.070	PELLADEL INV. BK.	0	0.00	28	16800	26399	1.22	1.25	0.03	0.03
MARK SECTOR TOTALS											
2.970	1.900	MOJ. LAND INVR.	6.6	0.00	2	690	1304	2.10	2.01	0.09	0.09
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS											
1.960	1.530	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	11.4	7.32	25	1563	9121	1.64	1.64	0.00	0.00
1.640	1.140	JOR. ELECTRICITY	9.1	0.00	2	4100	9121	1.59	1.56	0.03	0.03
8.000	4.800	ARAB INTL. HOTELS	16.6	3.06	1	1000	4900	5.00	5.00	0.00	0.00
2.880	2.430	SHIPPING LINE	10.2	8.23	3	500	1218	2.44	2.43	0.01	0.01
2.730	1.130	RAIL. PORTFOLIO	10.2	0.00	1	3100	4294	1.35	1.37	0.02	0.02
1.160	0.900	REAL ESTATE INV.	20.4	3.46	1	150	120	0.95	0.95	0.00	0.00
1.170	0.920	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	19.3	0.00	1	200	160	0.95	0.95	0.00	0.00
2.410	1.790	KID. EAST HOTELS	21.3	0.00	4	1000	2130	2.15	2.12	0.03	0.03
3.660	3.180	JORD. INTL. INV. INDUC.	12.6	4.27	15	6450	20886	3.19	3.19	0.00	0.00
1.610	0.980	SARNA EDUCATION	10.4	0.00	1	8250	8246	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00
2.800	1.870	UNIFIED CO.	10.4	5.08	8	850	198	1.94	1.97	0.03	0.03
1.800	0.820	UNION LAND DEV.	0	0.00	12	3600	3939	1.08	1.08	0.00	0.00
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS											
1.530	1.170	ATTACHMENT	0	0.00	1	500	625	1.25	1.25	0.00	0.00
1.120	0.890	JOR. CHEMIST FACT.	20.1	2.04	17	5520	19342	3.52	3.52	0.00	0.00
3.750	2.900	JOR. PROGRESSIVE MILES	13.6	0.00	4	596	1873	3.12	3.12	0.00	0.00
6.030	4.750	ARAB POTASH CO.	16.2	3.14	14	1130	6153	5.40	5.35	0.05	0.05
11.180	8.900	JOR. PETROL. MARYAM	12.8	5.93	12	1670	14923	12.20	12.10	0.10	0.10
8.400	7.000	JORDAN TANNING	7.6	5.07	3	629	4438	7.00	7.00	0.00	0.00
9.250	7.100	JOR. ROBERTS HILLS	9.8	3.38	1	250	1850	7.45	7.40	0.05	0.05
5.870	3.660	ARAB PHARM. MARY.	20.9	5.26	80	12499	47904	3.72	3.80	0.07	0.07
2.600	2.250	JORDAN DATE	13.8	6.67	1	200	1405	2.81	2.85	0.04	0.04
3.950	2.600	GENERAL MINTING	7.2	10.68	1	800	2405	2.81	2.85	0.04	0.04
8.640	4.710	DAR ALDINAR INV. INV.	15.2	3.80	3	350	3030	5.40	5.35	0.05	0.05
1.500	1.240	LIVERPOOL & ROBERTS	8	0.00	110	288250	188187	0.63	0.66	0.03	0.03
3.090	1.300	NATIONAL STEEL IND.	0	0.00	3	1250	1563	1.27	1.25	0.02	0.02
1.420	0.840	NATIONAL INV. IND.	12.6	7.06	8	3500	2975	0.85	0.85	0.00	0.00
2.930	1.080	LYTHAM. PETRO. CHEM.	0	0.00	23	19250	23737	1.32	1.34	0.02	0.02
1.830	0.830	JOR. ROBERTS HILLS	0	0.00	9	6000	6026	1.01	1.00	0.01	0.01
8.900	3.660	RAIL. CANAL WIRE. MARY.	19.6	0.00	2	400	1263	3.25	3.25	0.00	0.00
1.940	0.950	JOR. SULPHUR CHEM.	0	0.00	16	5875	5995	0.99	1.04	0.05	0.05
2.590	1.080	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	24.5	0.00	10	6650	8709	1.25	1.31	0.06	0.06
2.590	2.380	UNIV. HOUS. INDUS.	7.7	7.84	45	14950	37922	2.56	2.55	0.01	0.01
2.480	0.890	JOR. INDUS. RESOURCES	20.9	0.00	34	7050	12903	1.63	1.66	0.03	0.03
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS											
1.160	0.820	UNION LAND DEV.	0	0.00	12	3600	3939	1.08	1.08	0.00	0.00
GRAND TOTAL											
INDEX: 147.60	INDEX: 147.60	INDEX: 147.60	INDEX: 147.60	INDEX: 147.60	INDEX: 147.60	INDEX: 147.60	INDEX: 147.60	INDEX: 147.60	INDEX: 147.60	INDEX: 147.60	INDEX: 147.60
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 19/05/1996											
1.900	0.700	JOR. TRADE PNC.	20.0	0.00	7	12300	9225	0.75	0.75	0.00	0.00
1.000	0.700	UNION INV. SOI	86.6	0.00	5	7750	2405	0.81	0.81	0.00	0.00
1.680	0.630	ARAB FIN. INVEST.	0	0.00	11	4200	3212	0.74	0.74	0.00	0.00
0.740	0.340	JOR. TOURIST TRAVEL CO.	0	0.00	1	250	8775	35.10	35.10	0.00	0.00
1.240	0.630	JOR. INDUS. MATCH-JEMCO	0	0.00	6	5000	2755	0.57	0.54	0.03	0.03
2.030	1.180	JOR. FOOD & MED.	0	0.00	3	750	333	0.72	0.71	0.01	0.01
0.300	0.120	MATL. COLLOID	0	0.00	6	2500	3923	1.54	1.57	0.03	0.03
1.270	0.600	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	0	0.00	6	3500	2100	0.60	0.60	0.00	0.00
1.100	0.700	MATL. MEX. IND. MAMICO	0	0.00	9	6500	4968	0.76	0.75	0.01	0.01
1.250	0.600	JORDAN STEEL	0	0.00	7	2000	1900	0.95	0.95	0.00	0.00
1.030	0.670	HYDRAST PHARM. 75%	0	0.00	7	6820	2820	0.89	0.88	0.01	0.01
1.850	1.100	UNION TOBACCO 75%	0	0.00	6	2200	2146	1.20	1.24	0.04	0.04
1.030	0.680	RABI PHARM. 50%	0	0.00	29	36980	8100	0.72	0.73	0.01	0.01
0.970	0.570	INDUS. ENG.	20.0	0.00	11	5550	3275	0.60	0.59	0.01	0.01
1.520	0.880	INDUS. CERAMIC	0	0.00	3	2500	2900	0.92	0.92	0.00	0.00
GRAND TOTAL											
128	112000	128	112000	128	112000	128	112000	128	112000	128	112000

JORDAN MARKETPLACE

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Louis Quatorze wins Preakness

BALTIMORE, Maryland (R) — Louis Quatorze held off a bid by Skip Away down the stretch to win the 121st Preakness Stakes, covering the 1-3/16 miles in a record-breaking one minute, 53 and 2/5 seconds on Saturday.

Editor's Note, one of three entries trained by D. Wayne Lukas whose record of six consecutive triple crown race winners was halted on Saturday, finished third. Lukas-trained horses won the two previous Preakness Stakes.

It was the fifth Preakness victory for jockey Pat Day and the first for trainer Nick Zito, who won the Preakness in 1994 with Tobasco Cat.

Preakness favourite Cavonnier (8-5) made a belated bid on the final turn, but never threatened in finishing fourth to the 8-1 Louis Quatorze, who was 16th in the Kentucky Derby two weeks ago.

The race was vindication for Day, who won his third straight Preakness. Day was taken off Prince of Thieves this week in favour of Jerry Bailey.

The other Lukas entries — Victory's Speech (fifth) and Prince of Thieves (seventh) — finished out of the money.

Louis Quatorze paid \$19.00, \$7.80 and \$5.20. Skip Away paid \$5.60 and \$4.60, and Editor's Note returned \$5.00.

Ironically, earlier this week Lukas had fired day off



Jockey Pat Day raises his arm in celebration after leading Louis Quatorze across the finish line at Pimlico to win the 121st running of the Preakness Stakes May 18 (Reuters photo).

Prince of Thieves, whom he rode to a Derby third, and replaced him with Jerry Bailey, who had won the Derby with now injured and retired Grindstone.

Bailey rode Prince of Thieves.

"I'm happy — not that his (Lukas') streak ended, just that mine continued," Day said. "There's no feeling of vengeance. I feel in my heart this is where God would have me be."

Nor, he added, did he feel any additional motivation

Saturday. "If you can't get motivated to run in a triple crown race you need to find another occupation," he said.

Lukas had called the jockey change a "coaching move" and a "gut reaction" and he declined to second-guess himself in defeat.

"Pat and I have had great success, especially here in the Preakness," Lukas said. "I never doubted that he was going to ride a tremendous race here. And he picked up a very large mount."

"I think if Pat would have

hidden Prince of Thieves that Jerry Bailey would have picked up Louis Quatorze. So that's the way things happen."

"I put in a new quarter-back and the other guy came in and threw a touchdown (against us)."

There was one other irony in Louis Quatorze's victory following his Derby 16th. The last trainer to win a triple crown race before Lukas started his streak was Zito, who won the 1994 Derby with go for gin.

Cantona out of Euro '96 squad

PARIS (R) — French trainer Aime Jacquet left Manchester United striker Eric Cantona out of his 22-man squad for the European Championship in England next month.

Cantona, who played a major role in helping United to a League and F.A. Cup double this season, has repeatedly said he wanted to stick to the group of players who earned France a place in Euro '96.

"Eric's qualities as a player have never been in doubt," he said. "But I have two priorities — obtain the best possible result at Euro '96 and work for the future, for the 1998 World Cup."

Jacquet, who watched Cantona score the only goal in United's Cup final victory over Liverpool earlier this month, has repeatedly said he wanted to stick to the group of players who earned France a place in Euro '96.

"Eric's qualities as a

Benfica win Portuguese Cup

LISBON (R) — Benfica ended a disappointing season on a high note on Saturday with a 3-1 Portuguese Cup final victory over Sporting.

But the showpiece of the season was marred by the death of a 36-year-old Sporting fan who was hit by a flare.

He died during the first half after a flare thrown from the Benfica spectators' section hit him in the chest.

Afterwards the formal cup presentation ceremony was called off and Portuguese president Jorge Sampaio, who watched the match, appealed for calm.

The two sides, playing in front of a capacity

500,000 crowd at Lisbon's national stadium, are fierce rivals and 800 police were on hand to make sure there was no trouble.

Argentine striker Mauro Airez put Benfica ahead after only eight minutes. Captain Joao Pinto then took centre stage with a goal in the 40th minutes.

Sporting, last season's cup winners, scored a consolation goal from the penalty spot six minutes from time after Gomes had fouled Sa Pinto. Gomes was sent off for the challenge.

Carlos Xavier, who converted the spot-kick, was sent off himself in the final seconds for gesticulating at the referee.



Athletics meet in the Atlanta Olympic Stadium May 18: Morcelli won the race and Holman placed second (Reuters photo).

Nouredine Morceli, from Algeria, leads May 18: Morcelli won the race and Holman placed second (Reuters photo).

Johnson, Torrence, Lewis shine in Atlanta GP meet

ATLANTA (AP) — Two months before opening ceremonies, Olympic stadium was dedicated Saturday with the Atlanta Grand Prix, an event that brought together an especially strong field and gave the athletes a taste of the 90-degree Fahrenheit (32 Celsius) temperatures they can expect in July.

Michael Johnson blazed around the same track where he hopes to make Olympic history this summer. Gwen-Torrence thrilled her hometown crowd and Carl Lewis proved he isn't over the hill yet.

Johnson won his 19th straight race at 200 meters with the fastest time in the world this year, 19.83 seconds. He needed every bit of speed to beat 1992 Olympic champion Michael Marsh, who was second at 19.88.

"Marsh put a little pressure on me," said Johnson, who overtook his closest rival with 50 yards to go and barely held on. "I was just trying to bide my time. I felt like I still had another gear left. I was trying to gradually catch him and pass him."

Torrence, racing in her hometown, won the 100 with the fastest time in the world this year, 10.85, then took a first-pumping, hand-waving victory lap around the new track before a standing ovation from the crowd of 43,328.

Johnson, who hopes to become the first man to win Olympic gold in the 200 and 400, will have plenty of competition in the latter if Saturday's meet was any indication.

Butch Reynolds, who was suspended for alleged steroid use in 1990 and failed to qualify for the Barcelona Games four years ago, won the 400 easily with a time of 44.33, the top clocking for the year and slightly off his world record of 43.29.

"I felt sluggish in the beginning," he said. "This lets you know your training is going well. Performance comes first."

World record holders Sergey Bubka of Ukraine, Javier Sotomayor of Cuba, Jonathan Edwards of Great Britain and Nouredine Morceli of Algeria all won their events.

Bubka cleared 19-foot-9 inches (6.02 meters) in the pole vault, the highest ever in the United States, and attempted to break his 2-year-old outdoor record of 20-1.75 (6.14 meters). However, he failed in three attempts at 20-2 (6.15 meters).

Sotomayor won the high jump at 7-7.75 (2.33 meters). Morceli ran the fastest outdoor mile in U.S. history with a time of 3:50.86 and Edwards captured the triple jump.

Cyclist Lemond hammers through retirement

NEWTON, Massachusetts (AP) — Greg Lemond still shaves his legs. It's something racers do to cut wind resistance.

Nearly a year and a half into retirement from professional cycling, the only American to win the Tour de France (he did it three times) still can dance on the pedals.

He proved that Saturday with a quick 24-mile (39 kilometres) ride through Boston's western suburbs with about 100 fans — many of them amateur racers — and former teammate and Olympic bronze medalist Andrew Weaver.

Weaver and Lemond both were part of the 1980 Olympic team. For old time's sake, Weaver instigated a sprint near the ride's end only to see Lemond explode off his saddle and pass him at about 35 mph (56 kph).

"The started coming around me pretty early, and I thought, 'gee, Greg, I'm just accelerating here. I guess he didn't realise I'm just an old guy,'" said Weaver, 37, now an architect in Boston.

Early on, as one rider wearing a jersey from Lemond's old team Z snuck in just inches behind the great one's rear wheel, another joked: "Hey, Greg, no big ring today, OK?"

Lemond, riding one of his signature carbon fiber bikes, smiled and answered: "I always ride in the big ring."

Such has been the 34-year-old's approach to all aspects of his life, on and off the bicycle. His tactical zest and love of gadgetry saw him win the Tour de France — the superbol of cycling — three times, twice after a nearly fatal hunting accident. He also won the world championship's Rainbow Jersey three times, twice as a pro and once as junior.

Lemond was the first professional to use aero bars in Europe, the first to use a cyclocomputer, the first to use a hard-shelled helmet. He also was the first cyclist to sign a \$1 million contract.

But all that ended in December 1994, when Lemond retired. He told the Associated Press he only started cycling again a month ago, having burned out from the grueling competition and lagging results in Europe.

"I don't miss the way I raced in the last few years," he said during a break in signing autographs at international bicycle centre, where he was promoting his line of high-end racing bikes. "I don't miss the way I raced where I struggled, people telling me I wasn't motivated or I didn't want to race anymore. I don't miss that."

"I do miss the way I raced even after my hunting accident," he continued, referring to the shotgun blast in 1987 that left 40 or so lead pellets in his body. "Even then, I was sub-par from where I should have been. I won two tours, but that's it, really. I had a long career but a shortened career. It's a little frustrating."

Adding to the frustration was the discovery that Lemond has a rare muscular disease called mitochondria myopathy, which does not affect his daily routine but is believed to have sapped his ability to perform at high levels.

Lemond figures he probably could race his bike again and be competitive in the United States but not at the world class level he loved. Besides, the entrepreneur has other ventures to occupy his time.

Aside from his bicycle company, which now is part of the industry Giant Trek Bicycle Corp., Lemond also is a partner in a growing Bruegger's bagels chain on the West Coast. The chain will expand from six to 24 stores in the next three months, and to 150 stores in the next five years, he said.

berth by beating Frankfurt 4-1.

Hamburg also spoiled the hopes of Hansa Rostock, a 1-0 loser to FC Cologne, of becoming the first team from former East Germany to make a European competition since German unification.

Dortmund had already clinched its second straight championship title last week, while Bayern Munich, Schalke and Borussia Moenchengladbach had wrapped up UEFA Cup spots.

But several of the Bundesliga's established clubs went into the final round fighting to avoid relegation.

Leverkusen, Cologne and Kaiserslautern all were hoping to avoid the fate of already-relegated Frankfurt and hapless last-place KFC

Hamburg in UEFA Cup; Kaiserslautern relegated

BERLIN (AP) — FC Kaiserslautern, a founding member of the Bundesliga, was relegated for the first time in the league's 33-year history when it managed no more than a 1-1 draw at Bayer Leverkusen in the final round Saturday.

Markus Munch's equalizer with nine minutes left helped Bayer Leverkusen salvage the 1-1 draw. Leverkusen was also fighting against relegation.

Kaiserslautern joined Eintracht Frankfurt as the second of the founding teams of Germany's top league that had never before fallen into the second division to be relegated.

Hamburger SV, driving back to the top after several bad years, clinched the league's final UEFA cup

berth by beating Frankfurt 4-1.

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Glasgow Rangers win Scottish Cup

GLASGOW (AP) — Gordon Durie scored three second half goals and Danish international Brian Laudrup hit two as Glasgow Rangers romped to a 5-1 victory over Hearts Saturday to add the Scottish Cup to its League triumph.

It was one-way traffic be-

fore 37,730 fans at neutral Hampden Park with Laudrup firing Rangers ahead eight minutes before half time, swapping passes with Durie in midfield and running clear to shoot home.

The Dane added a second four minutes after the break when his right wing cross

slipped through the legs of Hearts' French goalkeeper Gilles Rousset.

Durie made it 3-0 in the 66th with the best goal of the game.

The Rangers midfield strung together a series of first-time passes that sliced through the Hearts defence and Durie volleyed home Laudrup's left wing pass first time.

John Colquhoun replied for Hearts 10 minutes later with a well-struck low shot through a crowded Rangers penalty area but Durie added two more in the 79th and 85th minutes.

The fourth was from another pass by Laudrup and he headed the fifth from close range from a centre from the right.

Although Rangers had English midfielder Paul Gascoigne on the lineup, Laudrup was the star of the show and he set up two of Durie's goals as well as scoring two of his own.

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Sonics rout Jazz in opening game

SEATTLE (AP) — The Seattle SuperSonics let the Utah Jazz know what it's like to be on the other end of a blowout.

The frantic and flawless Sonics broke away from Utah in the second quarter and finished off the Jazz off with five consecutive 3-pointers in the fourth period, opening the Western Conference finals with a 102-72 rout Saturday.

It was an impressive performance in every way by the Sonics, who hadn't played since last Sunday when they completed a four-game sweep of Houston.

Seattle made 10 3-pointers and outrebounded the Jazz by 16 in the first half alone.

It was Utah's worst loss of the season and worst loss in team playoff history. And it was all the more startling considering the Jazz got to the third round by beating San Antonio by an average of 23 points per victory.

The fans at the key center added to Utah's humiliation, rattling Karl Malone by counting off the seconds he took to shoot his free throws. Malone, whose deliberate style from the foul line was criticised by Seattle coach George Karl, responded to the heckling by missing 5 of 6 free throws.

Shawn Kemp and Gary Payton scored 21 points each. Detlef Schrempf had 14 and Sam Perkins and Hersey Hawkins added 13 apiece. Seattle had 11 steals, 19 fastbreak points and led by as many as 32 in the final quarter.

Game 2 in the best-of-7 series is Monday night. That should allow for a bit of rest for the Jazz, who had barely more than 36 hours to prepare for the series after finishing off the Spurs on Thursday night.

Their fatigue began to show in the second quarter when Seattle broke the game open by closing the half with a 25-6 run. The Jazz pulled within 15 early in the fourth quarter, but Seattle replied with consecutive 3-pointers by Payton, Perkins, Nate McMillan, Perkins and Frank Brickowski.

Malone led Utah with 21 points and Jeff Hornacek had 13.

No one else scored in double figures for the Jazz, who have an 0-7 record in conference final road games.

Seattle shot 55 per cent for the game, becoming the first Jazz playoff opponent to make more than half its shots. Kemp was the most accurate, going 10 of 11 from the field to go along with his eight rebounds, five assists and two steals.

The Sonics broke the game open when they started converting their offensive rebounds and knocking down the 3-pointers they were missing in the first quarter.

In one key sequence in the final 1:05 of the half, the Sonics scored their last three baskets off offensive rebounds while holding Utah without a point.

The Sonics started to pull away after Malone went to the bench for a rest 4½ minutes into the second quarter.

Seattle immediately started passing inside, then kicking out for open 3-pointers. The Sonics, who missed their first six attempts from behind the arc, got consecutive treys from Hawkins and Perkins to go ahead 42-35.

Malone quickly came back into the game, but Kemp had a driving layup and a dunk on Seattle's next two possessions, building the lead to 46-37, and Malone's 13-foot (4-meter) jumper with 2:05 left turned out to be Utah's last field goal of the half.

Kemp had his second offensive rebound with 1:03 left and converted it, and Ervin Johnson rebounded Kemp's missed free throw one second later and scored on another putback.

Finally, with less than a second left, Kemp converted another offensive rebound to send Seattle into the locker room with a 54-39 lead.

Seattle didn't let up at the start of the third quarter, getting back-to-back 3-pointers from Schrempf in the first 2:21 and opening the half with a 10-2 run. A 3-pointer by Payton and a dunk by Kemp off an assist from Payton got the lead up to 24 with 5:20 left.

Fiorentina win trophy in 21 years 1st

BERGAMO (R) — Argentine international Gabriel Batistuta helped Fiorentina to their first trophy in 21 years on Saturday with the final goal in a 2-0 defeat of Atlanta in the two-leg Italian Cup final.

The cup, the first important prize for the Florence side since they last won the cup in 1975, also delighted Roma and Parma fans whose teams both qualified for the UEFA Cup competition as a result of the 3-0 aggregate win.

Fiorentina, who won their home leg 1-0 earlier this month, took their time to assert themselves in a hostile Bergamo stadium but defender Lorenzo Amoroso broke through in the 48th minute and Batistuta sealed the win in the 61st.

"Fiorentina has not won anything for so long, at last we are bringing something back to Florence," said coach Claudio Ranieri, celebrating the historic victory. "The lads have had a great season, this is their reward at last."

Batistuta, the top scorer in the cup competition this season, said he was delighted for his team mates.

"They deserved it. Twenty-one years is so long to wait," the striker said. "I'm really happy. They deserved it. What makes me most happy is seeing my team mates celebrating."

The match was overshadowed by violence between rival supporters who clashed inside and outside the ground.

Several fans from both clubs were hurt after they started throwing bottles and fire crackers at each other in the northern city's stadium.

Two security officials were slightly injured as police fired teargas to keep the supporters apart.

Fans let off rockets and firecrackers before the match and at half time, shrouding the pitch in smoke.



Jordan's Al Faisali

7th Arab Cup Winners' Cup Faisali take on Riyadh today

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Al Faisali meet Al Riyadh of Saudi Arabia Monday as the semifinal round of the 7th Arab Cup Winners' Cup gets underway. In the other match Algeria's Mdyah meet Morocco's Olympic Khreibkeh.

All eyes will be on Al Faisali who delighted Jordanian soccer fans by qualifying to the championship finals. They have already made Jordan's sports archives after becoming the first Jordanian team to qualify to the semifinal round of the elite event. Al Faisali finished second in group 2 after tying Morocco's Olympic Khreibkeh 1-1, holding Qatar's al Itihad to a 0-0 draw and scoring Jordan's only win in the history of the event when they beat Sudan's Al Mawroh 5-1.

The other Jordanian team in the championship, hosts Al Wihdat, were knocked out of the first round after losing all their matches and ending up last in the group.

While Al Wihdat were playing the Cup Winner's Cup for the first time, Al

Faisali's participation set a championship record with their fourth appearance in the event. (Al Ramtha were the first to represent Jordan in 1993).

Jordanian results in the past four Cup Winners' Cup participations included two draws and 11 defeats in total.

Participating teams have never before won the title or even runner up position. Past champions, notably teams from Egypt and Tunisia, are missing the competition especially the championship record holders, Olympic Baidawi of Morocco, who won the title a record three consecutive times.

The championship concludes with the final match Wednesday.

Officials praise championship

Jordan Soccer Federation (JSF) Chairman HRH Prince Abdullah Ben Al Hussein, who attended the Faisali-Khreibkeh match, was the first to congratulate Al Faisali on their qualification

to the semifinals.

"Al Faisali delighted all Jordanians. It was great to see all fans backing the Kingdom's representative in the championship as they qualified to the semis," he said.

Al Riyadh's chairman Prince Faisal Bin Abdullah said his team was looking ahead to winning the title after failing to do so in the past four participations.

He praised Al Faisali's form adding that his team would have preferred to face Al Faisali in the final.

Minister of Tourism, and JSF Vice-Chairman Saleh Irsheidat also praised Al Faisali's efforts saying he hoped to see even better matches in the final rounds.

"Al Wihdat could have done better. However, Jordanian teams in general should concentrate more on offensive capabilities."

Minister of Youth Mohammad Daoudieh said the championship was "an important cornerstone in Arab sports and Jordanian officials exerted all efforts to make it a success."

1996 basketball season gets underway

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

Amman — The season's basketball competitions return to the scene Monday as the second division championship gets underway with seven teams taking part.

The series is expected to be tough as it is this year's journey groups three former first division teams — Al Hussein, Homenmen, and Al Abassi.

Al Abassi are the most recently relegated when they pulled out of the 1995 first division. Al Hussein and Homenmen were relegated in 1994 and failed to return to the first division ever since.

The other teams include newcomers Al Jeel, Al Rayah, Gazzet Hashem and Al Ashrafieh. Al Karak were also supposed to participate but pulled out Sunday and will now be relegated to the third division.

While the last team in the standings will be relegated to

the third division, this year's regulations stipulate that more than one team have the chance to be promoted from one division to the other.

The top team in the standings will automatically be promoted to the first division, and the runner up will also have that chance by playing with the last placed team in the first division.

The same goes for the third division. While Al Fubeis won the title and will be playing in the second division next season, runner up Abu Nusair will meet the last placed team in the second division. The winner of the encounter will be classified in the second division in the upcoming season.

The Jordan Basketball Federation commenced the season with the third division which was concluded last week. Al Fubeis won the series and were promoted to the second division for the first time after overcoming Abu Nusair 65-60. Other participating teams included Kufkhal, Sama, Qamim, and Ebbin.

Muster keeps Italian title

ROME (AFP) — Top seed Thoms Muster of Austria showed why he is the undisputed king of clay here on Sunday, when he beat Holland's Richard Krajicek 6-2, 6-4, 3-6, 6-3 to retain his Italian Open title.

Muster, whose nine-month, 38-match unbeaten run on clay ended in Munich two weeks ago, proved he is back on track with his fifth tournament victory this year on the surface and the 38th of his career.

Shrugging off his exertions here, Muster is determined to play before the home crowds at St. Polten next week — before leaving for Paris.

"My goal is to make a certain amount of points, to stay in the top 10 and win as many matches as possible," said the Austrian. "I'm not worried about overloading. I just want to continue playing well. For me, it's better to play next week than take a few days off."

As for his chances on Paris' Roland Garros courts, Muster acknowledged: "I guess I'm the favourite, but there's no guarantee of winning."

"I'm expecting to do well, but if I can't, well, I've already won Paris. There will be less pressure than last year."

Krajicek's blistering serve, which had guided him into the final, proved to be his undoing in the first two sets.

"I had problems with my service. I wasn't serving well and when I don't serve well it affects my whole game," said the disappointed Dutchman.

The Dutchman paid tribute to his opponent's ability, which had enabled to make some remarkable winning returns.

"He's one of the quickest players and he runs for everything. That's why he's so good," said Krajicek. "Because my volleys weren't too good. I couldn't put them where I should have done and he was running some of them down."

He was also left to rue the organisers' decision to put extra clay on the court for the final.

Habsudova takes Graf to the limit

BERLIN (AFP) — Germany's world number one Steffi Graf was taken to the limit by Slovakia's Karina Habsudova in the final of the German Open here on Sunday — winning 4-6, 6-2, 7-5. Graf failed to dominate during the 108 minute battle earning the Slovakian world number 54 a standing ovation, which reduced her to tears.

"I knew Habsudova would go for a lot and she had nothing to lose, but I was

hoping to play a little better than in Rome," said Graf, referring to her Italian Open quarter-final defeat to Swiss teenage star Martina Hingis. "But I still have quite a lot of work ahead of me next week before the French Open. My forehead let me down a bit," she added.

Habsudova broke Graf three times in the first set, although Graf broke back twice, but the third time was enough to give her the set 6-4.

Graf broke Habsudova immediately in the second set and although she failed to convert three more break points, she made no mistake a second time to lead 2-2. She served out to win the set, having only conceded three points on her serve during the set.

Graf, led 6-5, and finished off the match to earn herself \$200,000 dollars, while Habsudova gained the adulation of the German crowd and \$100,000.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
& TAYANAN HIRSCH
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RENDER UNTO CAESAR

Both vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH
♠ QJ64
♥ Q8
♦ QJ886
♣ AQJ
WEST
♠ K8
♥ KQ952
♦ KQ2
♣ 1064
EAST
♠ 75
♥ K973
♦ 752
♣ A9532

SOUTH
♠ A10932
♥ A4
♦ A94
♣ K87

The bidding:
SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
1♣ Pass 3♣ Pass
4♣ Pass 5♣ Pass

Opening lead: Jack of ♣
South's play to the first trick on this hand was quite correct in

terms of the heart suit alone. It was completely wrong if the hand is considered as a whole!

North's jump raise to three spades with 13 points in high cards wouldn't raise an eyebrow among those who play this sequence as forcing. Since queens and jacks are overvalued in the 4-3-2-1 scale, line 4 raises should be equally content — the hand is not worth its face value. Regardless, South has ample to carry on to game, but too many losers to look for more.

West led the jack of hearts, covered by the queen and king and taken by the ace. Dummy was entered with the ace of clubs and the queen of spades was run to West's king. West found the superb defensive play of returning a low heart, which proved to be the only way to defeat the contract. East won the trick with the seven and shifted to a diamond. Declarer

played low. West won with the queen and got out with a trump. Eventually declarer lost a trick to the king of diamonds for down one.

Before playing to the first trick, declarer should have worked out that the contract was secure if the losers could be limited to one in each suit except clubs. To accomplish that, East had to be kept off lead.

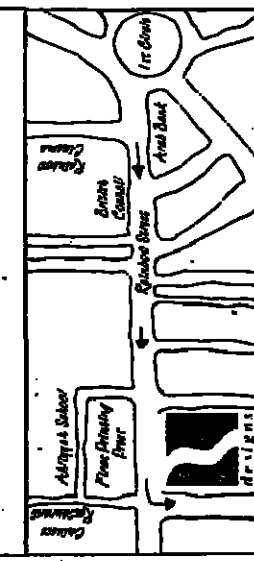
Correct technique is for declarer to play low from dummy to the first trick, then allowed the jack of hearts to win. Now declarer can win the heart continuation, cross to the table with a club and by the trump finesse. It loses, but declarer can win any continuation, draw trumps, then clear clubs, ending in dummy.

Now the jack of diamonds is run. West can win, but is trapped in an endplay. A diamond return is into declarer's tenace, and any other suit allows declarer to ruff in dummy while discarding the remaining diamond loser from hand.



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Fifi Abdou & Kamal Shinnawi
*Gold Market
(Arabic)
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30
*Toy Story
Show: 5:00

CONCORD "1"
*OUT BREAK
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30
*Ace Ventura "2"
Shows: 5:00, 8:00
CONCORD "2"
RICHIE RICH
Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 10:30

Fifi Abdou & Kamal Shinnawi...in
Gold Market
(Arabic)
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 8:30, 10:30
*DESPERADO
Show: 8:30

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Council protests Tantawi role in meeting

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Council of Islamic Organisation and Societies in Jordan on Sunday expressed surprise over the participation of Sheikh Mohammad Sayyed Tantawi of Al Azhar Mosque in Egypt in a symposium and a working dinner organised by members of the Lions Club in Egypt, and called on him to apologise for his participation in the symposium. In a letter addressed to Dr. Tantawi, the council said Sheikh Tantawi's participation in the function "organised by one of the Free Masons clubs has drawn angry reactions from Islamic institutions, councils and clubs in Egypt and elsewhere in the Arab and Islamic worlds." The council said Sheikh Tantawi's participation in the function is seen by Islamic institutions as a show of moral support for ideas and activities that are hostile to Islam, noting "their relentless and incessant work to break ties of unity, brotherhood and solidarity, and to sow seeds of rifts and conflict among the Muslims."

Sudan commission to investigate slavery

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Sudan has created a commission to investigate claims of slave dealing in the south of the country, the independent Al Khbar Al Yom reported on Sunday. Justice Minister Abdul Basit Sabdarat formed the panel to "look into reports by U.N. human rights rapporteur Casper Bito concerning the existence of slavery and forced disappearances in Sudan," the paper said. The commission head, Ali Ahmad Al Nasri told the paper the panel would tour the country and submit a report in August. "Due to the ongoing war in the south, many people have disappeared or been abducted by rebels," Mr. Nasri said. Mr. Bito said in his report in April that the existence of slavery in Sudan was "no longer debatable," warning of "an alarming increase in the number of reports on cases of slavery, servitude, slave trade and forced labour."

Faisal Hussein ends Morocco visit

RABAT (R) — The Palestinian National Authority and Morocco have agreed to set up a joint economic cooperation committee, Palestinian official Faisal Al Hussein said at the end of a four-day visit to Rabat. The official Moroccan news agency MAP on Sunday quoted Mr. Hussein as saying before he left Morocco on Saturday that the committee would meet twice a year to boost economic cooperation. Mr. Hussein, who was heading a delegation of Palestinian businessmen on their first visit to Morocco, said he was satisfied with his talks in Morocco. MAP said Mr. Hussein met King Hassan on Wednesday.

Iran could publish papers to 'expose' U.S. leaders

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran is in possession of documents to expose the two main political parties in the United States ahead of U.S. presidential elections in November, President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani was quoted as saying on Sunday. "We have documents on the American and their two parties which we can publish on the threshold of the elections and influence public opinion in that country," he said in an interview with Euro-News, published by newspapers here. "But we do not play such games," he said, without giving details about the alleged documents. "We'll let the American people choose whoever they want because it doesn't make any difference to us who rises to power in that country."

Top Bahraini poet, writer dies

MANAMA (R) — A leading Bahraini poet and writer, Abdul Rahman Jassim Al Ma'awdah, died in London where he underwent medical treatment for six months, Bahraini newspapers reported on Sunday. They said Ma'awdah, 85, who graduated from the American University in Beirut, died on Saturday night. They did not disclose his illness.

'Court will favour Yemen in island conflict'

SANAA (AFP) — An international arbitration panel will rule in Yemen's favour in its conflict with Eritrea over strategic Red Sea islands, a newspaper said here Sunday. "Yemen is confident that Hanish Island is Yemeni. It has legal documents" to back its claim, the Al Thawra newspaper said. "These documents will be presented at the right moment to the judges in charge of the arbitration after the agreement in principle is signed," it added. Yemen and Eritrea will meet in Paris on Tuesday to sign the French-mediated agreement to submit their dispute over the Hanish archipelago to an international arbitration panel.

Giant oil spill in Red Sea

PORT SAID (AFP) — A underwater oil pipeline burst, releasing three large oil slicks in the Red Sea off the Egyptian coast, shipping sources said on Sunday. The pipeline, owned by the state-owned Jabco Petroleum Company, burst on May 12 between Hurgada and Ras Gharib near the mouth of the Gulf of Suez, 500 kilometres southeast of Cairo, the sources said. It leaked three "large oil slicks" which spread towards the nearby ESSO plant on the coast before Jabco managed to seal up the leak, they said.

Algerian wins Arab critics' prize

CANNES (AFP) — Algerian filmmaker Merzak Allouache won the Arab critics' prize at the Cannes Film Festival on Sunday for a film about Arab life in Paris, organisers said. His film "Salut Cousin!" tells the story of an Algerian country boy's arrival in the French capital where his cousin takes him in, and his struggle to come to terms with the life of North Africans there. The movie was presented in the directors' fortnight parallel section of the film festival. The Arab critics' prize is awarded by a group of about 50 critics from various Arab countries.

Arab armies to produce training booklet

CAIRO (AFP) — Arab military leaders have decided to publish a common training booklet for their armed forces, an Arab League official said here on Sunday. The booklet will include "unified training styles as put the bases and regulations for planning and organisation in joint training for Arab armed forces," Deputy Secretary General Mohammad Said Al Birjadar said. Mr. Birjadar made the comments at the end of a week-long meeting of the heads of military training from Arab states at the league headquarters in Cairo. The officials also discussed "the subject of training aids used by Arab land forces," he said.

Israeli daily newspaper to shut down

TEL AVIV (AP) — The Israeli daily newspaper Davar Rishon will publish its final issue Tuesday after negotiations with a possible purchaser broke down, the paper's editor said Sunday. Talks between the Histadrut, Israel's main labour union that owns the newspaper, and the Zinger-Barnea investment group fell apart when the sides could not agree on employee contracts. They were hoping to merge Davar with Telegraph, an Israeli financial daily. The paper first announced plans to shut down in February, but stayed open after Zinger-Barnea expressed interest in the merger. Davar Rishon was first published 70 years ago under the name Davar. Originally considered an agent of the centre-left Labour Party, the paper adopted a more independent stance along with a new name last year.

Karadzic seen retaining grip despite shifts

SARAJEVO (AFP) — Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic has bowed to pressure by delegating some of his powers to a hardline deputy, but international peacekeepers and Bosnian authorities warned Sunday that he is not yet gone for good.

Mr. Karadzic, an indicted war crimes suspect who as such has been frozen out of the peace process released an ambiguous statement late Saturday saying he was stepping down from some of his duties as Serb "president" to devote himself to domestic questions, including refugees and the economy.

The Serb leader, who last week replaced his "moderate" prime minister with a hardline apparition, Gorko Kljickovic, named his successor in dealings with the international community as current hardline nationalist Vice-President Biljana Plavsic, the Serb news agency SRNA said.

"In line with the constitution of the Republika Srpska, I asked Mrs. Plavsic to replace me in contacts with the international community," SRNA quoted him as saying. But the governments in Belgrade and Sarajevo as well as international officials implementing the Dayton peace accords in Bosnia, remained unsure of how to interpret Mr. Karadzic's statement, despite intense international pressure on the Serb leader to cede power as required by Dayton.

In Belgrade, the Serbian government made it clear that it regarded the announcement as a *de facto* resignation by Mr. Karadzic, with Belgrade radio later referring to Ms. Plavsic as "acting president."

In Sarajevo meanwhile, the Bosnian government said it hoped Mr. Karadzic's apparent withdrawal from power was not merely a ruse to enable him to continue

pulling the strings behind the scenes.

"We hope that the international community has not struck a deal with Radovan Karadzic so he can withdraw from power while remaining active behind the scenes," Bosnian Foreign Ministry spokesman Mirza Hajric said.

"We are not certain of the significance of this withdrawal," Mr. Hajric said. The top civilian peacekeeping official, Carl Bildt, said that Mr. Karadzic did indeed appear to be withdrawing from public life in the Serb republic he had himself created.

The situation is not yet entirely clarified, but the gist of it is that I don't expect we'll see very much of him in public life," Mr. Bildt told reporters in Sarajevo.

In Banja Luka, meanwhile, a Serb opposition leader expressed concern that Mr. Karadzic's move was little more than sleight of hand to maintain his own ascendancy. Miodrag Zivanovic, chairman of the social-liberal party of the Serb republic, said Mr. Karadzic will "always maintain the upper hand."

"The appointment of Mrs. Plavsic means that Mr. Karadzic not only still has hold of the reins, but also he will become stronger because now he has his hands free," Mr. Zivanovic said.

Mr. Bildt, a key figure in international efforts to implement the complex Bosnian peace treaty, spoke at length with Serb Parliament Speaker Momcilo Krajisnik in Pale and Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic in Belgrade in his efforts to push Mr. Karadzic from the political map.

A source close to the talks told AFP that Mr. Krajisnik had given a commitment to Mr. Bildt to secure Mr. Karadzic's removal from the political scene within hours.

'Secret Israeli unit triggered Cana hit'

LONDON (Agencies) — Israel's bombardment of a refugee camp at Cana in southern Lebanon was triggered by a secret Israeli death squad formed to track down Hizbollah guerrillas and officials, the Observer reported Sunday.

The special commando, baptised "Egoz" (Hebrew for almond), had infiltrated the U.N. camp at Cana on April 18 in their hunt for members of the group, when they radioed for help, fearing their cover had been blown, the British newspaper reported.

Israeli commanders ordered the group to pull out, and proceeded to bomb the camp in an attack which killed 102 people, it said.

The bombardment came amid Israel's 16-day military campaign in southern Lebanon, launched in reprisal for Hizbollah rocket strikes on northern Israel.

The Egoz commandos are believed to be a formidable unit. "These boys are bloody good," one Western military official told the Observer.

"They play an extremely important role against the terrorists in Lebanon."

"In its attempt to keep Egoz secret, the Israeli government has so far held back from publishing the full details of its inquiry into Cana," the paper said.

Western intelligence sources confirmed that Israeli soldiers were secretly deployed behind the lines in South Lebanon and estimated about 50 Hizbollah fighters were killed in hand-to-hand combat with Egoz, according to the Observer.

The paper said another secret Israeli squad, known in the army as Unit 504, is authorised to operate in frontline Arab States and may recruit agents, gather intelligence and kidnap — but it is not authorised to kill.

Egyptian security sources in Cairo were quoted as saying that Unit 504 was responsible for recruiting five Egyptians, two of whom have been arrested as spies.

Deceased deputy's brother seen favourite to secure Mafrag seat

By Rana Hussein

Special to the Jordan Times
AMMAN — Voters in the Northern Bedouin district cast their votes in by-elections Monday to fill the seat left vacant in the Lower House of Parliament by the death of Nawaf Qadi in March.

Mafrag Governor Ahmad Lawzi said 26,549 citizens were eligible to vote at the 50 voting centres around the governorate.

The municipality, which declared Monday a formal holiday to allow voters to cast their ballots, has exerted all efforts to ensure a fair and just elections, he said.

The nine candidates are all tribal members, and they will

depend on their respective tribe's support to win the election, one observer told the Jordan Times.

He said that the strongest candidate expected to win the by-elections was Trad Qadi, representing the Bani Khalid tribe, the strongest tribal base in the northern Badia district, and a brother of the late deputy.

"Trad Qadi received assurances and supports from his tribe as well as other tribes, including the Issa tribe, which did not nominate a candidate, that they will support him in the elections," the observer said.

The son of the late deputy Qader Nawaf Qadi, an engineer, is also running for

elections, but his chances, according to observers, are slim.

Qader Qadi insisted on running in the elections to "finish the period in parliament which his late father could not finish," said he observers.

According to the observer, Abdullah Sour, brother of House Speaker of the Sa'd Hayel Sour has a narrow chance of winning the election.

"The Mafrag community is not enthusiastic about the idea of having two members from the same family in parliament," the observer said.

(Continued on page 7)

3 Japanese teams due here in June for aid discussions

By P.V. Vivekanand

Jordan Times Staff Reporter
AMMAN — Discussions on Japanese assistance to infrastructure projects in Jordan enter the stage of finalisation next month, when three Japanese delegations are expected to visit the Kingdom for in-depth discussions with the Jordanian government.

The visits of the delegations follow the formalisation of the Japanese government's budget for fiscal 1996 (April 1995-March 1996) two weeks ago. The delay in the formalisation of the budget had stalled finalisation of the government's aid programmes for the year, said the Japanese ambassador to Jordan, Takayaki Kimura.

Mr. Kimura said one delegation was due in Amman on June 3 to discuss a Jordanian request for aid to finance the upgrading of water supply to Amman involving a Deir Alla-to-Zai pipeline and rehabilitating and expanding a water pumping station at Deir Alla and a treatment plant at Zai.

The total cost of the project is around \$80 million, but the expected Japanese contribution was not immediately available. The project was discussed in principle during

meetings held here by visiting Japanese delegations.

The assistance for the project is expected to come through the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

Another delegation, tentatively scheduled to arrive here in early June, will discuss a project to rebuild the King Hussein and Sheikh Hussein bridges, border crossing facilities as well as access roads, Ambassador Kimura told the Jordan Times.

Discussions on this project have also reached an advanced stage, and financing for the project will be a grant, also arranged through JICA, the ambassador said.

The third delegation, the visit of which is also scheduled for sometime in June, will deal with issues categorised under human resources development. On focus for the delegation's visit will be building schools and other educational projects as part of Jordan's educational programme.

Japan's Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund is expected to grant a soft, long-term loan of \$60 million for this project.

Japanese grants and project-specific and non-project loans for Jordan as

well as the amount rescheduled debts totalled more than \$300 during fiscal year 1995. The grant aid for the year was \$30 million.

According to the latest statistical bulletin of the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ), Jordan's debts to Japan stood at JD 1,253.3 million (\$1.74 billion) at the end of 1995. About JD 91 million (approximately \$126.5 million) of the debts have been rescheduled.

Most of the unrescheduled debts represent long-term loans that came up for repayment beginning in the year 2000, hence the relatively small amount of rescheduled debts.

Japan started giving grant aids to Jordan in 1993 following a drop in the Kingdom's per capita income to less than \$1,200.

As a policy followed by all Japanese governments, Tokyo does not offer direct debt relief through write-off. However, successive Japanese governments, as an institution regardless of changes in political parties and individuals in power, have affirmed that it stands ready to make more credit available to Jordan to help the Kingdom achieve self-reliance and the ability to repay the debts.

Rights activist held in Gaza

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM

(R) — Palestinian police have arrested a local human rights activist in Gaza on charges of "distortion and slander," the prosecutor general said on Sunday.

"Iyad Al Sarraj has been detained yesterday (Saturday), and is charged with slander and distortion. He is still being interrogated for committed legal violations," said Prosecutor General Khaled Al Qidra.

Dr. Sarraj, a psychiatrist and human rights activist, was detained once last year on the same charges. This time, he was quoted in the New York Times newspaper, as saying that the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) regime, in charge of Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank since 1994, was "corrupt, dictatorial, and oppressive."

Dr. Sarraj talked in the interview about frequent arbitrary arrests without charges and without reason

by Palestinian police, and about torture in Palestinian prisons.

Since the PLO's takeover of self-rule areas, Palestinians complained in private about the Palestinian National Authority's (PNA) intolerance of criticism and restriction of freedoms.

Police arrested more than 900 Palestinians affiliated with the militant Islamic resistance movement following suicide attacks by the group in Israel in which 59 people were killed in February and March.

Palestinian police raided mosques and stormed universities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in its campaign against Hamas.

Several journalists have also been arrested and some newspapers were closed by the authority.

Dr. Sarraj, is head of the Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizens Rights.

A statement from the commission said Dr. Sarraj left his home with Palestinian police officers on Saturday afternoon and never returned. Jamal Hawilla, a lawyer for the commission, went to the police headquarters but was not allowed to see Dr. Sarraj, the commission said.

"To our knowledge, no official accusation or charge has been made against Dr. Sarraj," the statement said. The commission suggested the arrest might be connected with Dr. Sarraj's criticisms of the PNA in the New York Times.

Dr. Sarraj, a psychologist, also heads a mental health centre in Gaza.

He was detained for nine hours in December after complaining that Yasser Arafat's government had ignored queries about alleged abuses of prisoners. Mr. Arafat said then that Dr. Sarraj was detained "because he gave false information."

COLUMNS

Court decrees end to Fujimori's marriage

LIMA (AFP) — Peru's supreme court Saturday affirmed the divorce of President Alberto Fujimori from Susana Higuchi, ending a long personal and political soap opera that transfixed this South American nation. The supreme court affirmed a ruling last November by the Lima family court after the president filed for divorce in June 1995. Sources said the ruling would be issued in writing in several days. Higuchi had challenged the divorce proceeding and sought a reconciliation. The couple's marriage publicly hit the skids in August 1994 when Higuchi criticised a law passed by lawmakers loyal to the president that banned her from running for the presidency or seeking a Senate seat. She moved out of the presidential palace and accused members of her husband's cabinet with corruption. On August 23, 1994, the president stripped his wife of her title and duties as first lady. The couple has four children, and Fujimori has named their daughter Keiko Sofia the replacement public "first lady." The president filed for divorce on grounds that he had been the victim of a "serious insult," although Higuchi filed a motion seeking to have the grounds changed to "irreconcilable differences."

British teenagers have new pinup: Prince William

LONDON (R) — British schoolgirls have a new heart-throb — 13-year-old Prince William. Teenage magazines say their readers have developed a passionate interest in the prince whose parents, heir-to-the throne Prince Charles and Princess Diana, are locked in an acrimonious divorce battle. Top-selling Teen Magazine smash hits is giving away 250,000 "I love Willy" stickers to adorn the satchels and pencil cases of the nation. Another leading teen magazine, Live And Kicking, is listing "10 reasons why Prince William is cool." Smash Hits editor Kate Thornton said: "Normally we wouldn't cover the royal family but our 13 and 14-year-old readers see him as classic boyfriend material. He's good looking and bright and he's their age." She told the Sunday Express: "He goes to parties and is a bit of a rebel." But love-lorn teenagers face some tough competition — William has met supermodel Cindy Crawford for tea and a picture of Baywatch star Pamela Anderson adorns his bedroom wall at his school, exclusive Eton College.

Italian kids win freedom from parental slaps

ROME (R) — Italian parents can no longer hit their children even if they think a smack is of educational value, the high court said in a weekend ruling. The court decided in favour of a girl who in 1990, at the age of 10, complained to the police that her father beat her. The man said he slapped his daughter to teach her right from wrong, but Italy's highest court in a written judgement released on Saturday ruled against him. It said to hit a child was "culturally anachronistic and judicially insupportable...even if the parents who do this sincerely believe they are doing it for educational reasons."

Israeli elections — a watershed for peace?

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israelis

go to the polls in 10 days for national elections widely portrayed as a vote that will make or break the Middle East peace process.

But many analysts challenge conventional wisdom that a defeat of Prime Minister Shimon Peres by conservative leader Benjamin "Bibi" Netanyahu will bring about the collapse of peace negotiations and a return to the dark days of boycotts, extremism and the intifada.

On the surface, the choice offered Israeli voters appears stark as they prepare to elect deputies to the 120-member parliament, or Knesset, and for the first time directly choose their prime minister, with Peres and Netanyahu the only candidates.

Mr. Peres, 72, has been the driving force behind the historic land-for-peace agreements which brought limited self-rule to

Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and led Yasser Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) to renounce armed struggle against Israel.

If victorious in the May 29 polls, Mr. Peres and his labour Party are widely expected to negotiate the creation of some form of Palestinian state as the central element of a permanent peace settlement due to be achieved by May 1999.

Mr. Peres has also made clear his willingness to return most of the Golan Heights to Syria as part of a peace deal that he believes would lead to normalisation of ties with most of the rest of the Muslim world.

In contrast, the platform presented by Mr. Netanyahu, 47, and his Likud Party rules out the creation of a Palestinian state or a return of the Golan, pledges to settle more Jews in the occupied

territories and insists on the Israeli army's right to operate in Palestinian autonomous areas.

Such positions have led many, including much of Israel's business community, to conclude that a Likud victory will deadlock peace negotiations and spark a return to regional tensions and widespread Arab-Israeli violence.

Mr. Peres currently has a four-to-six point lead in opinion surveys over Mr. Netanyahu. But the polls also indicate that an eruption of new Palestinian attacks before election day would most likely swing the vote to Mr. Netanyahu.

Pessimists back up their fears by pointing to such powerful hardliners in the Likud coalition as former Defence Minister Ariel Sharon, ex-army chief Rafael Ilyan and Benny Begin, son of former Likud Premier

Menahem Begin.

These men represent the minority of religious and nationalist extremists. All three have reportedly been promised positions in a Netanyahu cabinet.

"These hardline people will hold Netanyahu to the most hawkish positions in the Likud programme and sooner or later this will lead to the collapse of the peace process," said David Horowitz, a veteran Israeli political observer and editor of the Jerusalem Report weekly magazine.

Other Israeli and Palestinian analysts caution against overestimating the impact of a Likud victory. They all acknowledge that permanent settlement negotiations with the Palestinians and progress with Arab neighbours will be much more difficult under a Likud government than a Labour one.

But they also say Mr. Netanyahu represents a new generation of pragmatic conservatives who understand that for both political and economic reasons, the peace process is past the point of no return.

"I know that if there is a Likud victory, the peace process will not proceed smoothly," said Khalil Shikaki, director of the West Bank-based centre for Palestinian Research and Studies. "But the environment across the region has changed significantly over the past three years and I think any Israeli government will think twice before taking extreme measures."

Opinion polls show that despite a recent wave of deadly suicide bombings, a solid majority of Israelis remain committed to the peace process launched by Labour.